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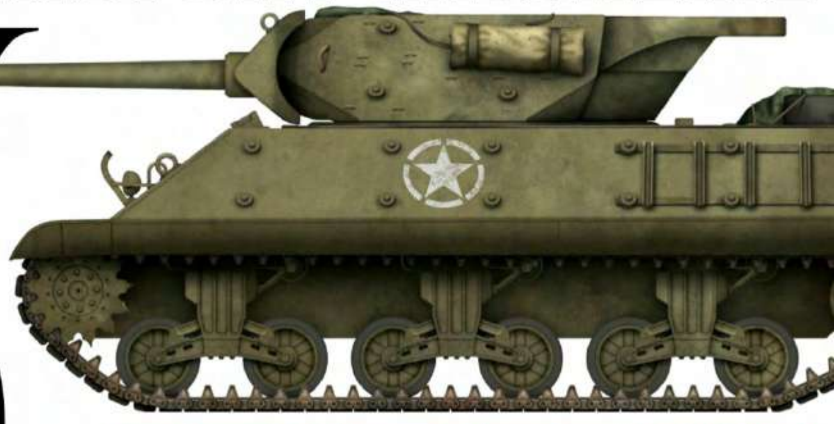

M10 TANK DESTROYER

Inside the Allies' prolific armour hunter

THE RED BARON'S DEMONS

How myth and propaganda hide the brutal realities of the First World War's iconic fighter ace

PLUS:

- Winged Hussars
- Ottoman armour
- Sikorski's exiles

GLORIOUS GLOSTERS

Exclusive veteran interview

FUTURE
ISSUE 092

THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

From Batista to the Bay of Pigs

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Valley of Tears

IDF 028 *General Ariel 'Arik' Sharon*

IDF 029 *Israeli Tank Commandar*

The 'VALLEY OF TEARS' is the name given to an area of the Golan Heights in northern Israel which became the site of a major tank battle during the *'Yom Kippur War'* of 1973.

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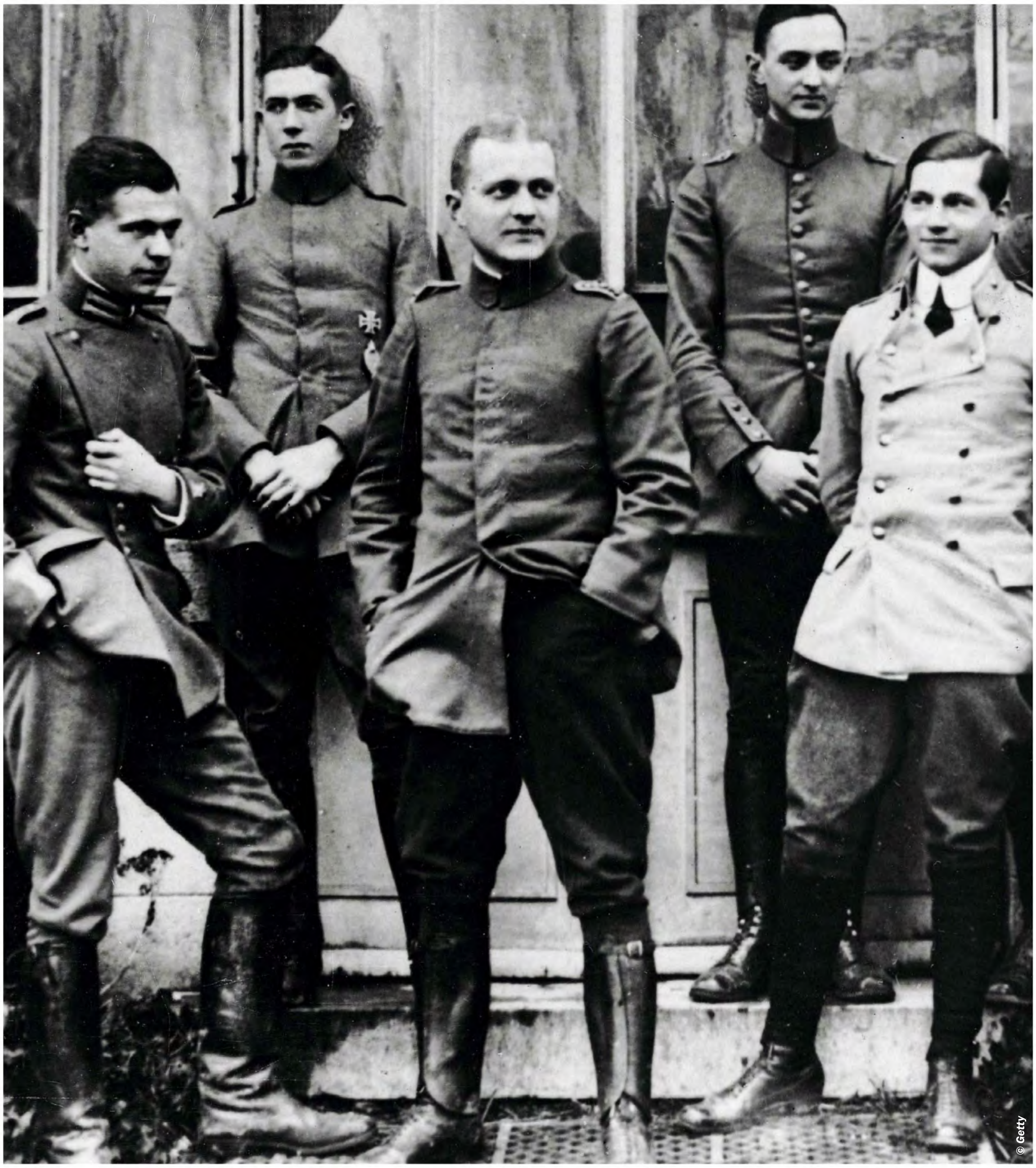
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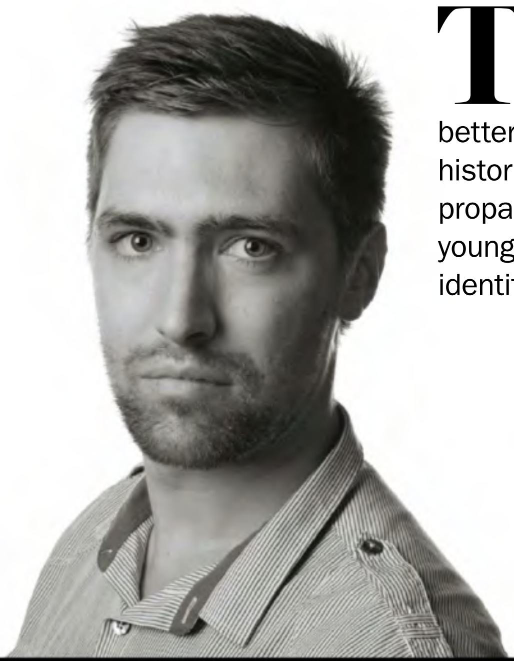
Above: Manfred von Richthofen (centre) is mythologised as a gallant fighter ace – but the truth is far more complex

Welcome

The image of the chivalric gentleman aviator gallantly flying into battle to duel with the enemy is one of the enduring impressions of the First World War. This idealised, heroic figure is nowhere better embodied than in Manfred von Richthofen, later known in histories as the Red Baron. As Stuart Hadaway uncovers this issue, the propaganda surrounding this aristocratic airman masks the tragedy of a young man struggling with the brutalities of war, reconciling his own identity as both a noble hunter and a bloody butcher of his fellow pilots.

Tim

Tim Williamson
Editor-in-Chief



CONTRIBUTORS

TOM GARNER

For this issue's Frontline, Tom recounts how the Cuban Revolution escalated from a small civil war to the focus of the a superpower showdown (page 12). Also this month he spoke with Korean War veteran Roy Mills (page 42).

STUART HADAWAY

Researcher and historian Stuart takes a close look behind the myth and propaganda surrounding Manfred von Richthofen. Stuart explores the tragic realities he and his fellow pilots faced in the brutal WWI dogfights (page 24).

MICHAEL HASKEW

For this issue's Operator's Handbook, Mike takes a look inside the M10, the most prolific US tank destroyer of the Second World War, armed with the powerful 3-inch M7 gun capable of puncturing most Axis armour (page 58).

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RED BARON'S DEMONS

THE RED BARON'S DEMONS

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This disastrous military campaign saw US-supported Cuban exiles attempt to topple the Castro regime

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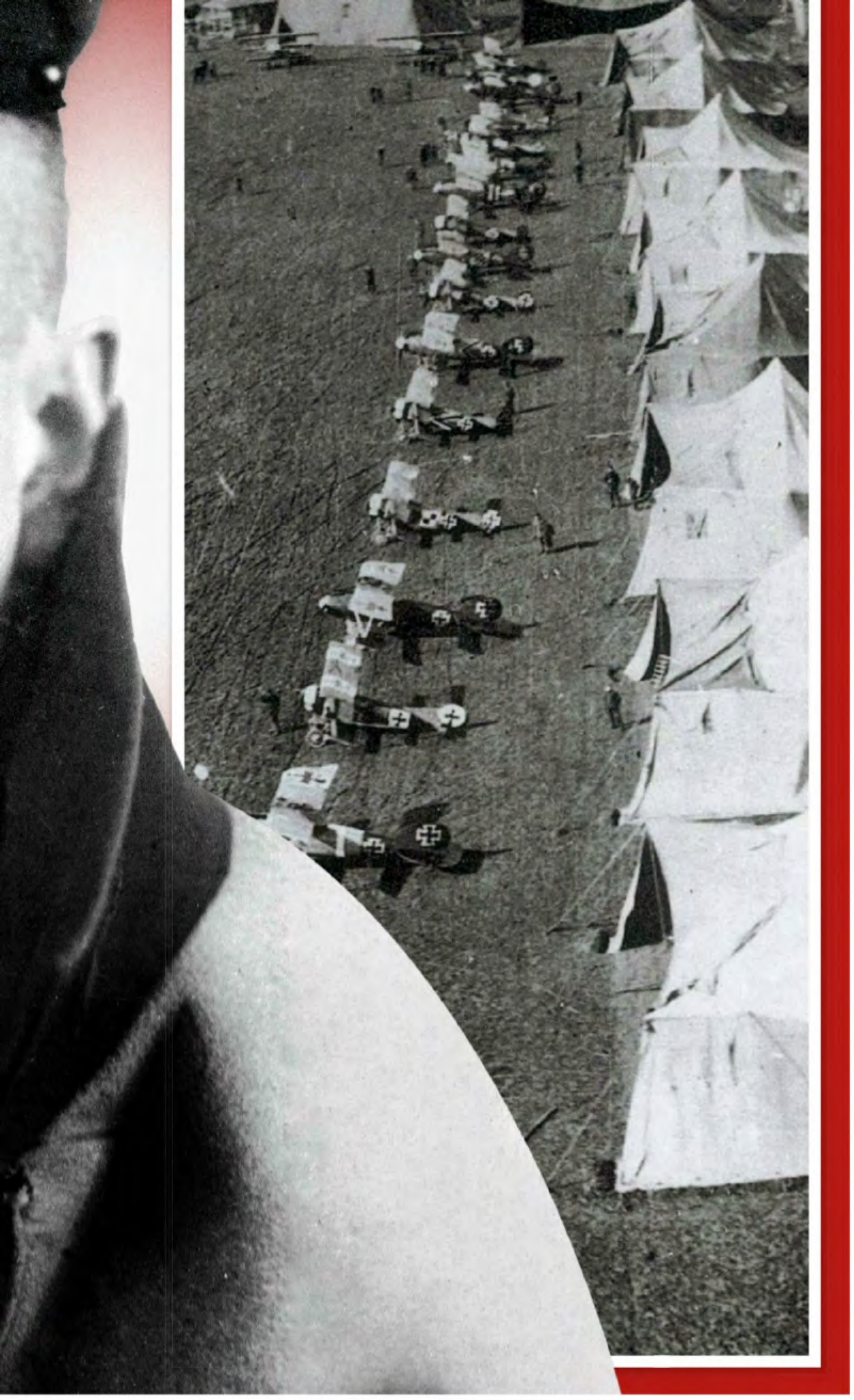

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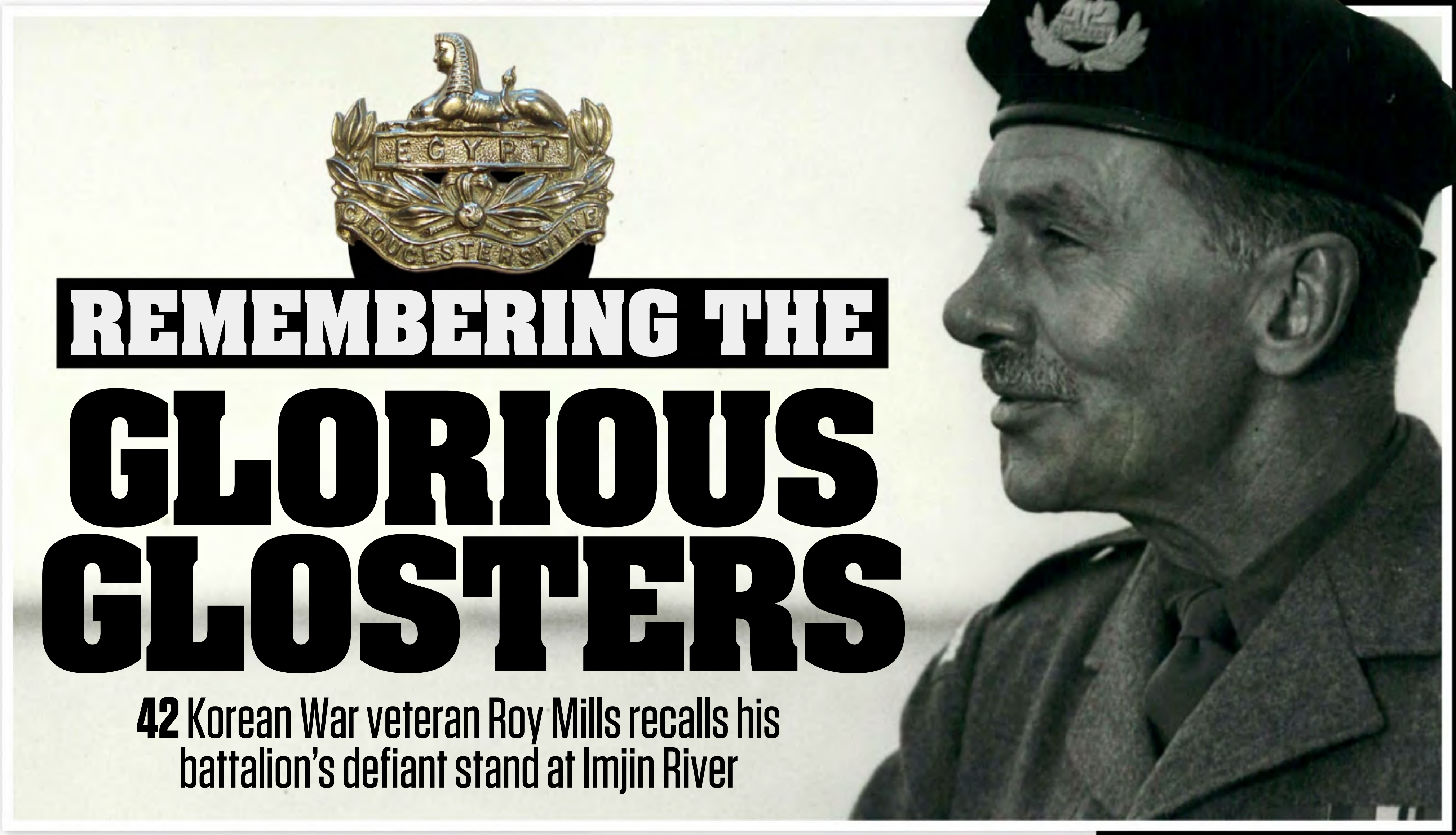
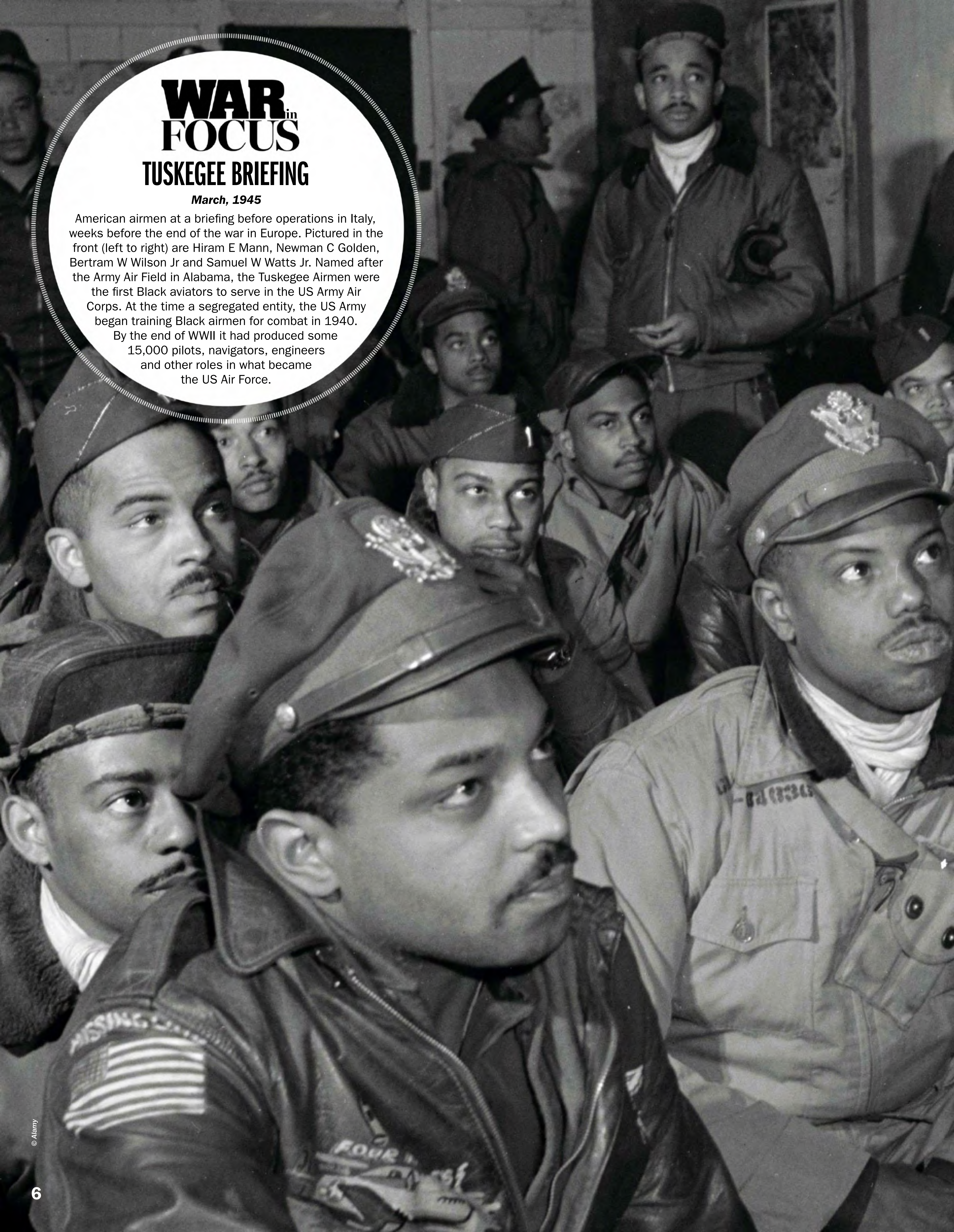


REMEMBERING THE GLORIOUS GLOSTERS

42 Korean War veteran Roy Mills recalls his battalion's defiant stand at Imjin River



WAR in FOCUS

TUSKEGEE BRIEFING

March, 1945

American airmen at a briefing before operations in Italy, weeks before the end of the war in Europe. Pictured in the front (left to right) are Hiram E Mann, Newman C Golden, Bertram W Wilson Jr and Samuel W Watts Jr. Named after the Army Air Field in Alabama, the Tuskegee Airmen were the first Black aviators to serve in the US Army Air Corps. At the time a segregated entity, the US Army began training Black airmen for combat in 1940. By the end of WWII it had produced some 15,000 pilots, navigators, engineers and other roles in what became the US Air Force.

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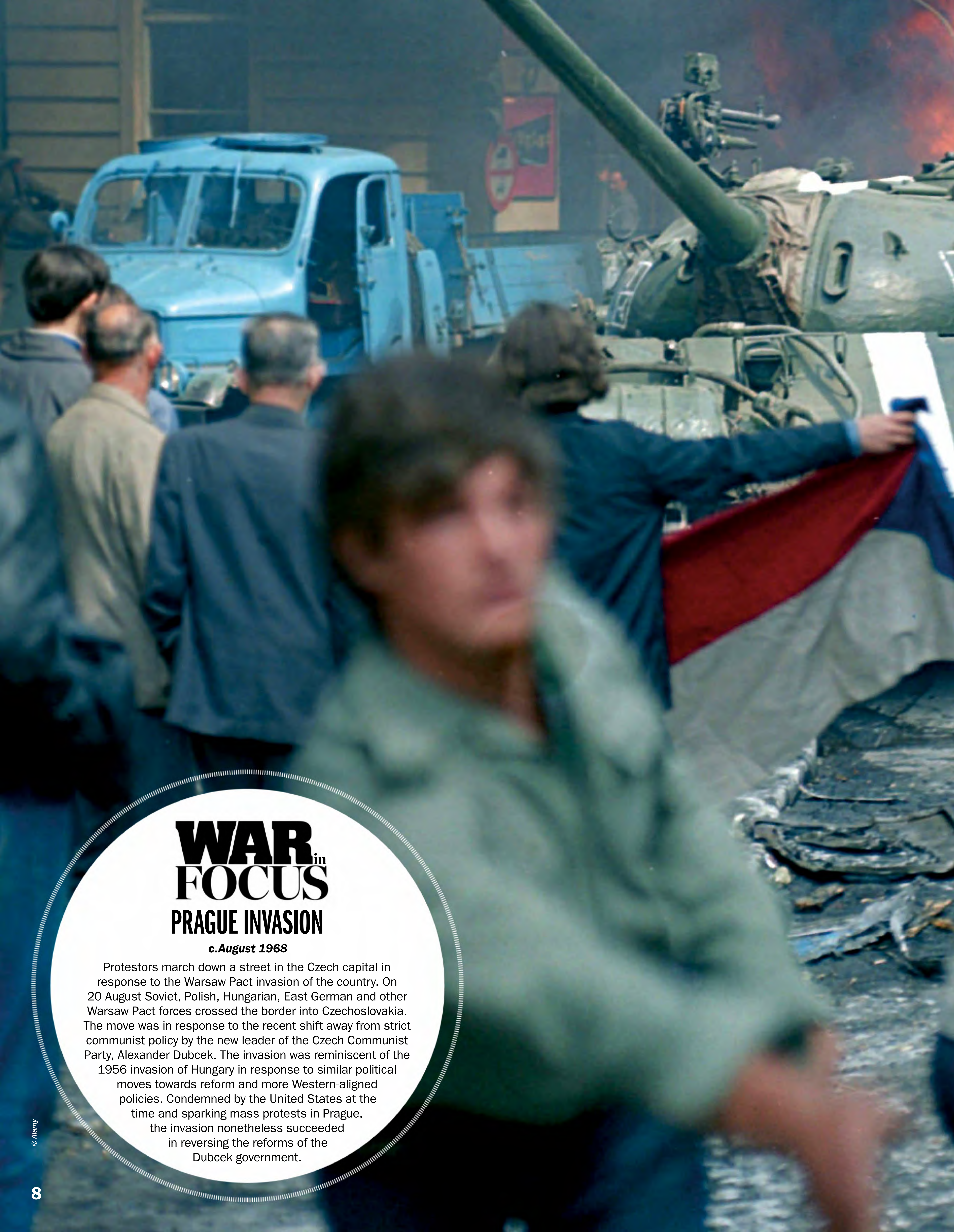

WAR in FOCUS

PRAGUE INVASION

c.August 1968

Protestors march down a street in the Czech capital in response to the Warsaw Pact invasion of the country. On 20 August Soviet, Polish, Hungarian, East German and other Warsaw Pact forces crossed the border into Czechoslovakia. The move was in response to the recent shift away from strict communist policy by the new leader of the Czech Communist Party, Alexander Dubcek. The invasion was reminiscent of the 1956 invasion of Hungary in response to similar political moves towards reform and more Western-aligned policies. Condemned by the United States at the time and sparking mass protests in Prague, the invasion nonetheless succeeded in reversing the reforms of the Dubcek government.

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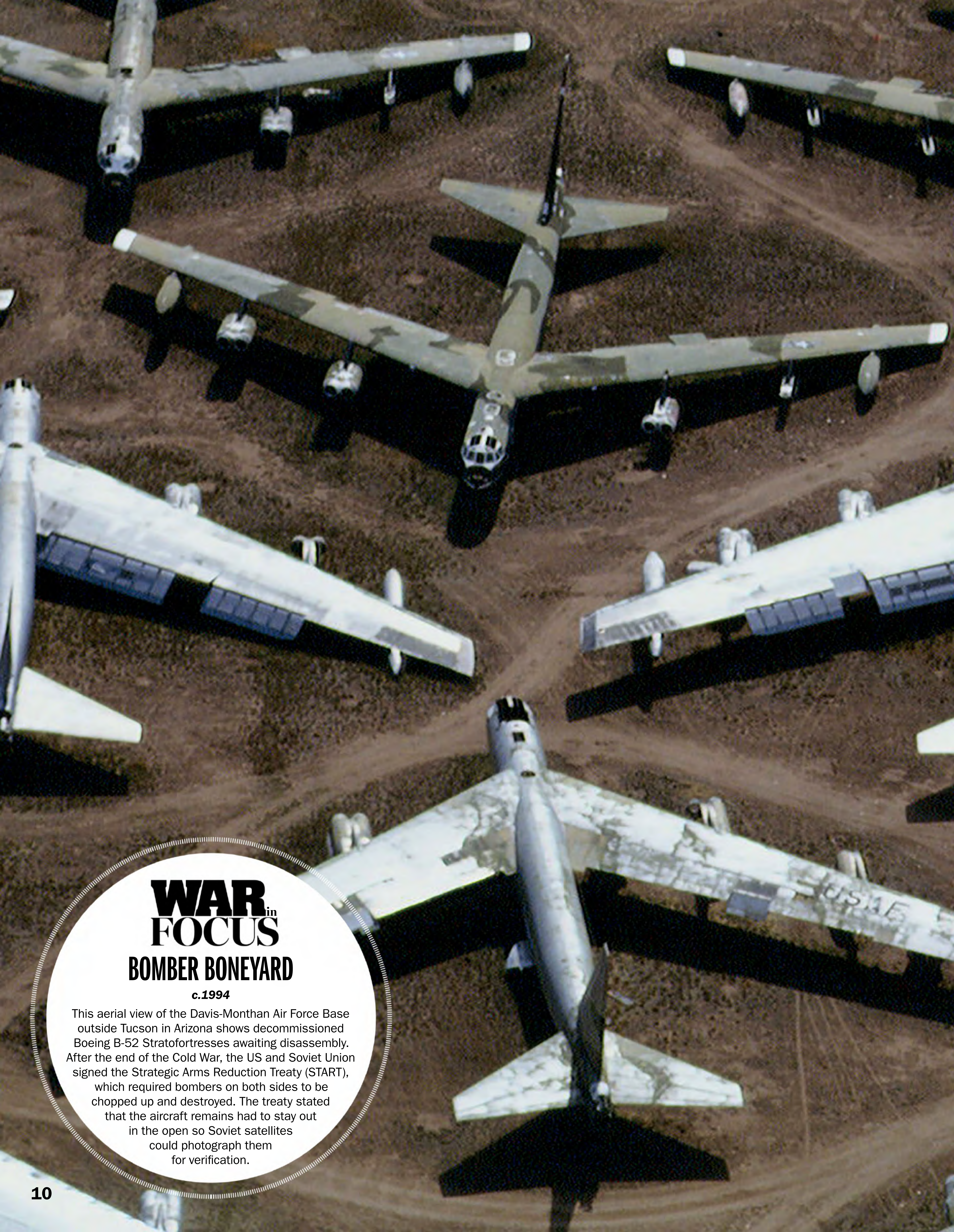


WAR in FOCUS

BOMBER BONEYARD

c.1994

This aerial view of the Davis-Monthan Air Force Base outside Tucson in Arizona shows decommissioned Boeing B-52 Stratofortresses awaiting disassembly. After the end of the Cold War, the US and Soviet Union signed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), which required bombers on both sides to be chopped up and destroyed. The treaty stated that the aircraft remains had to stay out in the open so Soviet satellites could photograph them for verification.

© Getty

TIMELINE OF THE...

CUBAN REVOLUTION

Guerrilla revolutionaries overthrow a military dictatorship in a Caribbean conflict that almost escalates into nuclear war

1952

RESISTING BATISTA

Military dictator Fulgencio Batista takes power and leads a corrupt, pro-American regime that is vigorously opposed by various groups. Two socialist brothers, Fidel and Raúl Castro, form a paramilitary organisation called 'The Movement' and begin arming and recruiting over 1,000 disaffected followers in Havana.

Fulgencio Batista promises prosperity to Cuba upon taking power in a radio broadcast to the nation, March 1952

26 July 1953

MONCADA BARRACKS ①

Fidel Castro leads 135 Movement revolutionaries in an attack against a barracks that is garrisoned by 400 government soldiers. The attack is defeated, with 61 revolutionaries killed and 51 captured, including Castro. At his trial he declares, "History will absolve me," before he's sentenced to 15 years in prison. He and the other prisoners are released on 15 May 1955.

Members of Batista's Cuban Army go into action after the attack on Moncada Barracks

1 November 1954

A CORRUPT ELECTION

Batista wins a presidential election against former president Ramón Grau by using fraud and intimidation. Grau withdraws before election day, which allows Batista to be elected without opposition. This increases riots and demonstrations against his regime.

BATISTA
ESTE ES EL HOMBRE

Batista meets crowds in an election car that has the slogan 'This is The Man'

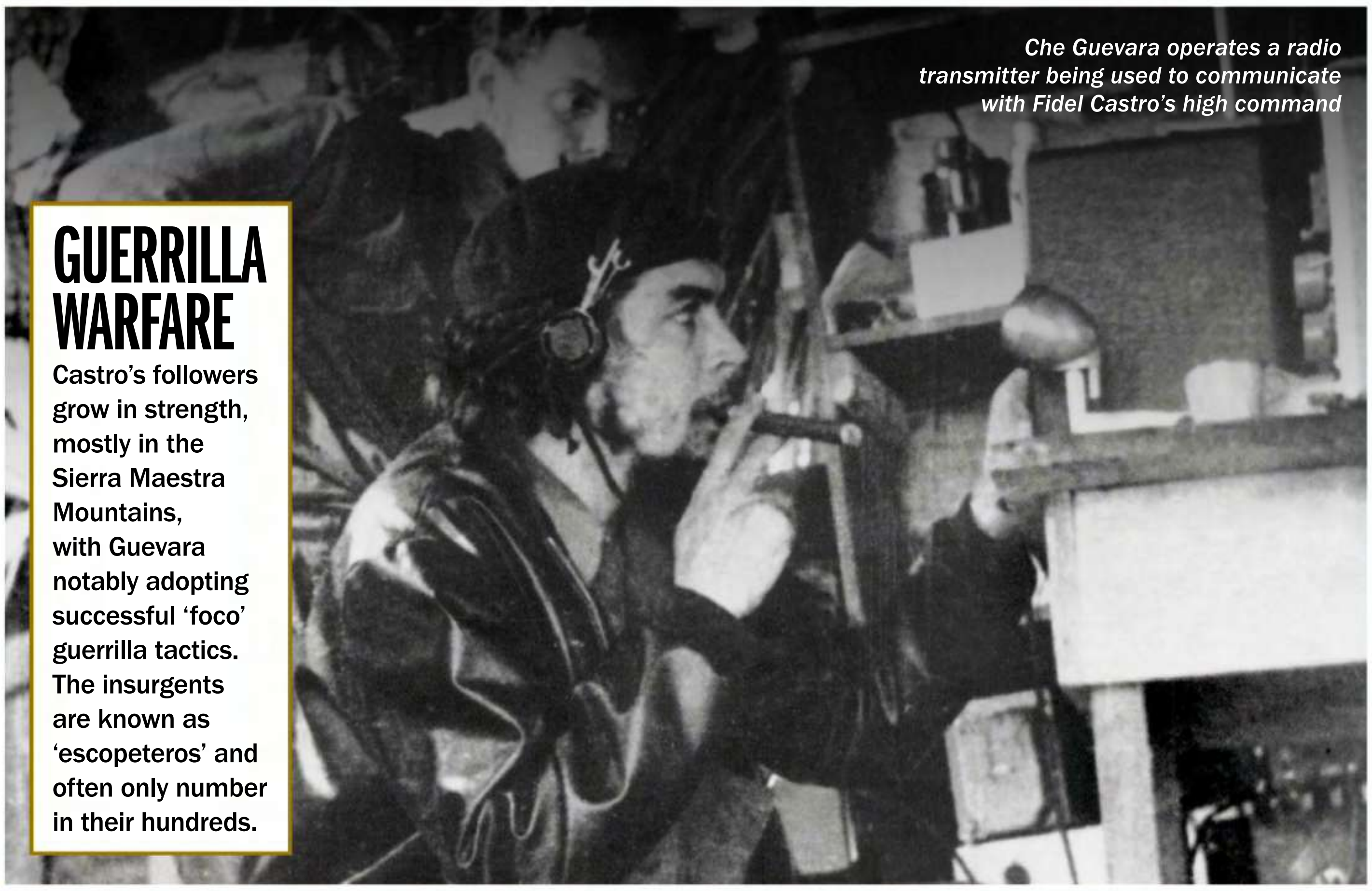
June 1955

GUEVARA MEETS THE CASTROS

Argentine revolutionary Ernesto 'Che' Guevara meets the Castro brothers in Mexico City and joins their cause, which is now renamed the '26 July Movement' after the attack on Moncada Barracks. The friendship between Guevara and Fidel Castro changes the course of the revolution.

Fidel Castro lights his cigar while Che Guevara looks on during the early days of their guerrilla campaign, c.1956

"THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN GUEVARA AND FIDEL CASTRO CHANGES THE COURSE OF THE REVOLUTION"



Che Guevara operates a radio transmitter being used to communicate with Fidel Castro's high command

1956-58

GUERRILLA WARFARE

Castro's followers grow in strength, mostly in the Sierra Maestra Mountains, with Guevara notably adopting successful 'foco' guerrilla tactics. The insurgents are known as 'escopeteros' and often only number in their hundreds.

Newly recruited Cuban Army soldiers march in a ceremony for President Batista

28 June – 8 August 1958

OPERATION VERANO

Batista attempts to turn the tide of the revolution by sending tens of thousands of troops from the Cuban Army into the Sierra Maestra hills to defeat the Movement. The rebels dramatically defeat Batista's men and make his government look weak. Fidel Castro then launches a counter-offensive.

25 November – 2 December 1956

VOYAGE OF THE 'GRANMA' 02

The Castro brothers, Guevara and 79 other insurgents sail from Mexico to Cuba on a boat called 'Granma'. They land at Playa Las Coloradas in Oriente Province on 2 December 1956 but are ambushed by Batista's troops. The majority of the revolutionaries are killed, with only about a dozen escaping to begin guerrilla operations.

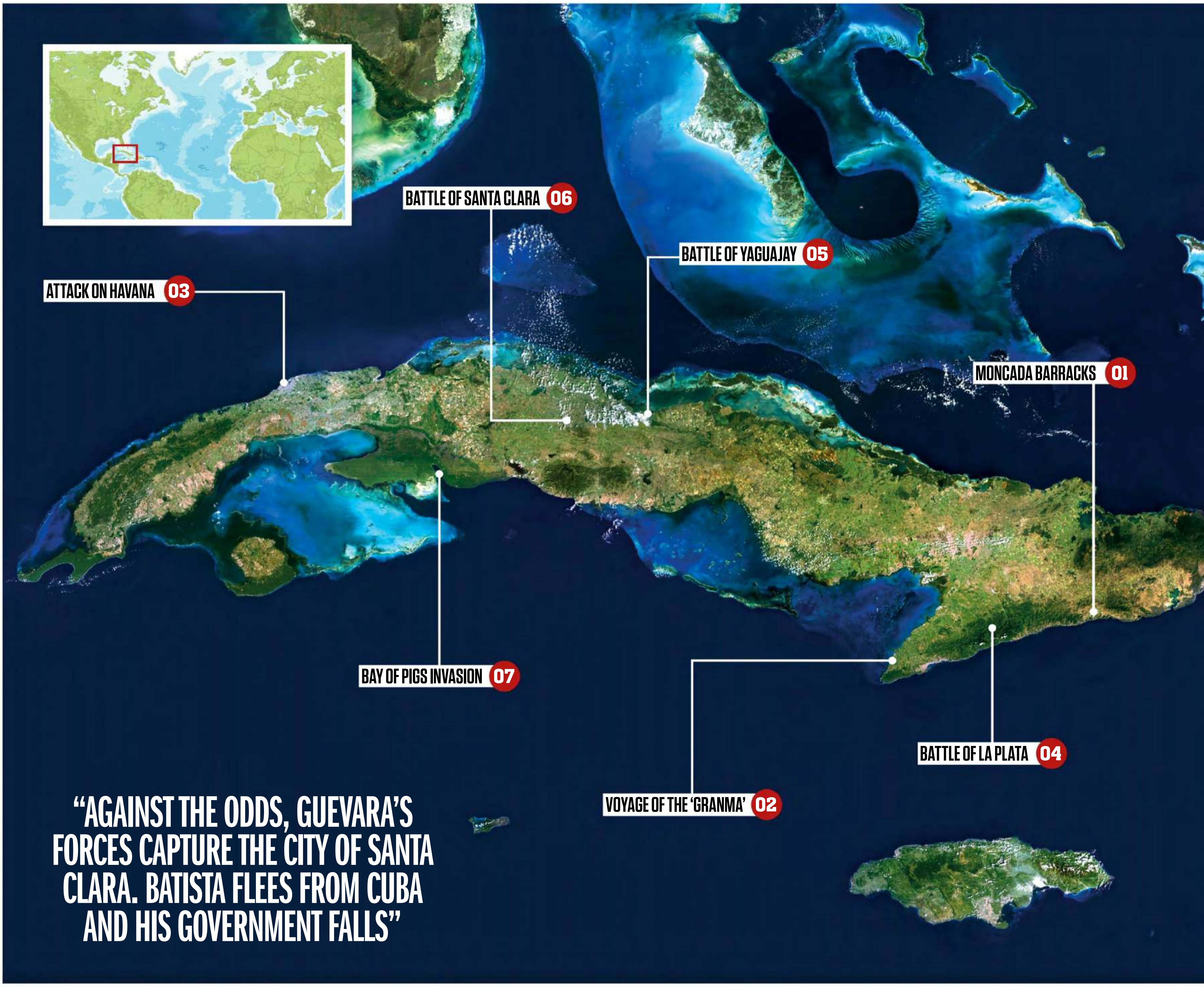
The original 'Granma' boat is preserved in a museum but this replica is used to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Bay of Pigs Invasion in Havana, 16 April 2011

13 March 1957

ATTACK ON PRESIDENTIAL PALACE 03

Revolutionaries from a student group called 'Directorio Revolucionario Estudiantil' attack the Havana Presidential Palace with the intention of killing Batista. They enter the palace but fail to find him. Dozens of revolutionaries are subsequently killed when government police exact violent reprisals.

An armed demonstration in favour of the revolution outside the Presidential Palace takes place two years after the attack


BATTLE OF SANTA CLARA 06
ATTACK ON HAVANA 03
BATTLE OF YAGUAJAY 05
MONCADA BARRACKS 01
BAY OF PIGS INVASION 07
BATTLE OF LA PLATA 04
VOYAGE OF THE 'GRANMA' 02

> "AGAINST THE ODDS, GUEVARA'S FORCES CAPTURE THE CITY OF SANTA CLARA. BATISTA FLEES FROM CUBA AND HIS GOVERNMENT FALLS"

11-21 July 1958

BATTLE OF LA PLATA 04

Two Cuban Army battalions intend to surround Fidel Castro's forces at the mouth of the La Plata River. Che Guevara ambushes one battalion while the other comes under heavy fire. A ceasefire allows Castro's forces to escape into the hills, while 50 government troops are captured.

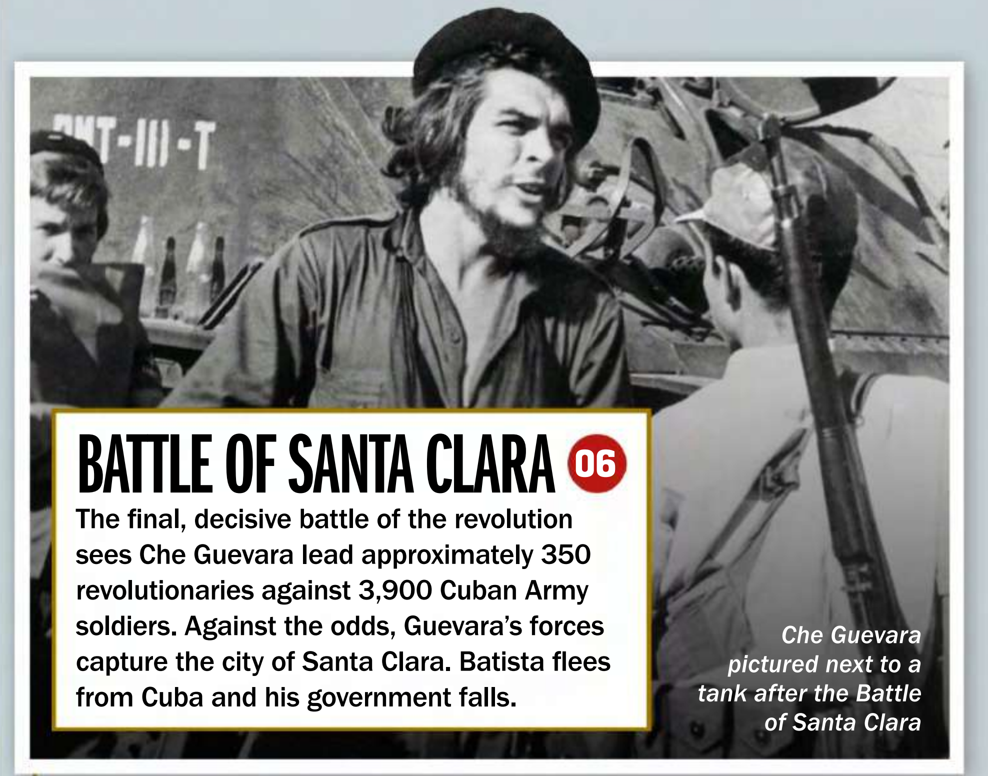
Fidel Castro with his command staff in a secret jungle hideout, c.1958

19-30 December 1958

BATTLE OF YAGUAJAY 05

Che Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos lead approximately 500 revolutionaries against a smaller Cuban Army garrison of 250 soldiers at Yaguajay. The garrison puts up a spirited defence and its soldiers fight until they run out of ammunition.

Camilo Cienfuegos leads a revolutionary cavalry unit through Yaguajay as it heads for Havana



BATTLE OF SANTA CLARA 06

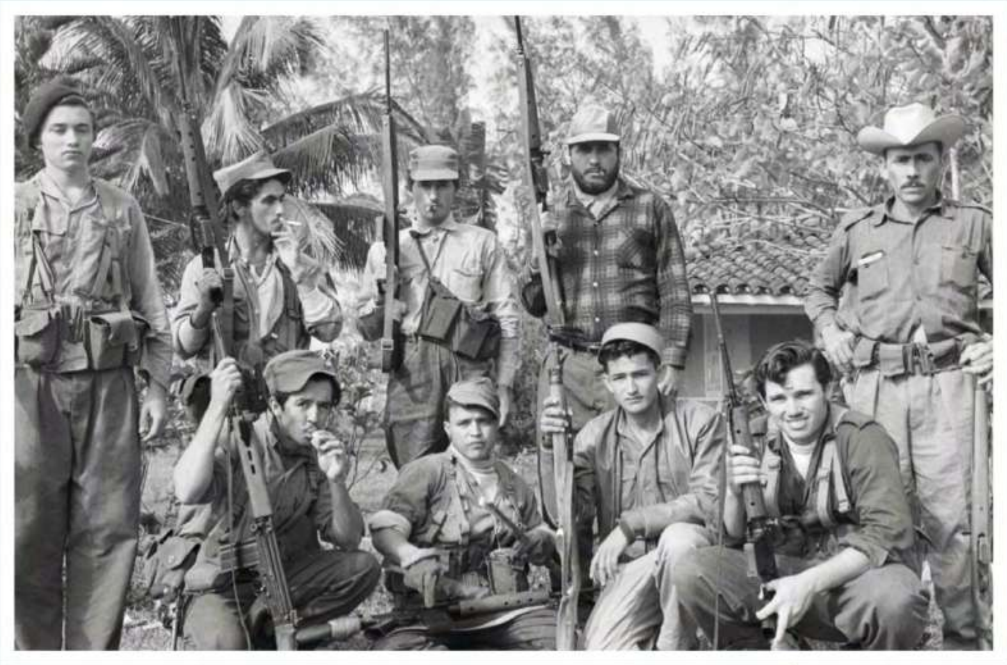
The final, decisive battle of the revolution sees Che Guevara lead approximately 350 revolutionaries against 3,900 Cuban Army soldiers. Against the odds, Guevara's forces capture the city of Santa Clara. Batista flees from Cuba and his government falls.

Che Guevara pictured next to a tank after the Battle of Santa Clara

ESCAMBRAY REBELLION

Varied groups of insurgents, including supporters of Batista, rebel against Castro's government in the Escambray Mountains. They are initially supported by the CIA and Dominican Republic but they are eventually defeated and killed in their thousands by the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces.

Militiamen pose at a base camp on a confiscated plantation, 14 February 1961



LA COUBRE EXPLOSION

Approximately 100 people are killed when a French freighter ship explodes in Havana Harbour. Castro uses the mass funeral to accuse the United States of sabotage. The Americans deny the charge but, regardless of the truth, diplomatic tensions increase significantly between Cuba and the USA.

Fidel Castro (far left) and Che Guevara (third from left) march in demonstration to a memorial service for the victims of the La Coubre explosion, 5 March 1960

Source: Wiki / PD / Gov

BAY OF PIGS INVASION 07

Over 1,000 Cuban exiles launch an invasion of Cuba that is covertly supported and directed by the US government. Initial American air strikes fail, which leaves the exiles (known as Brigade 2506) exposed to heavy Cuban Revolutionary fire when they land. The invasion turns into a disaster and is a major American foreign policy failure.

Cuban militiamen celebrate the failure of the Bay of Pigs Invasion

© Alamy

28 December 1958 – 1 January 1959

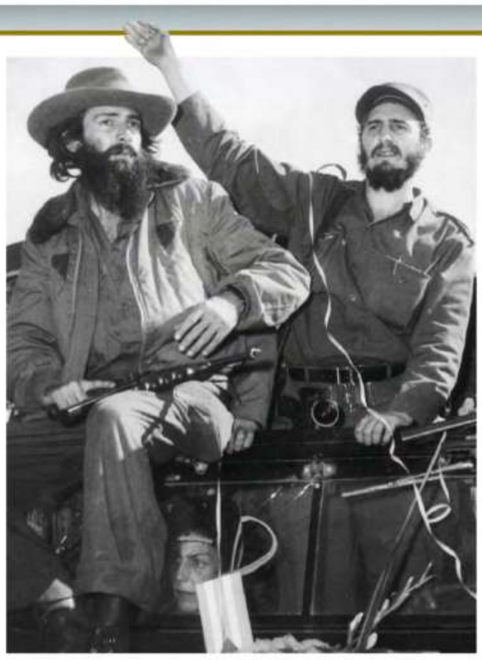
January – February 1959

1959-65

4 March 1960

17-20 April 1961

16 October – 20 November 1962



Fidel Castro waves to a cheering crowd upon his arrival in Havana, 8 January 1959

CASTRO GAINS POWER

Fidel Castro triumphantly enters Havana on 8 January 1959 and becomes prime minister of Cuba on 16 February 1959, with Manuel Urrutia Lleó acting as a liberal provisional president. Castro is the real power on the island and turns Cuba into a communist state, before becoming president in 1976. His dominance leads to increasing tensions with the United States.

CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

The Bay of Pigs attack leads Fidel Castro to allow the Soviets to deploy ballistic missiles on Cuba to prevent a further invasion. This triggers the greatest confrontation of the Cold War, but nuclear war is averted and America agrees to respect Cuba's sovereignty. Today Raúl Castro is still Cuba's de facto head of state.

Protesters from the group 'Women Strike for Peace' hold placards relating to the Cuban Missile Crisis in New York

PRESIDENT KENNEDY BE CAREFUL
PEACE or Perish
THE UN HANDLE THE CUBAN CRISIS!
Peace

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AMERICA'S STRONG MAN

American support for dictator Fulgencio Batista led to a failed foreign policy toward Cuba and facilitated the rise of Fidel Castro and communism

In this 1938 photo, Fulgencio Batista rides in an Armistice Day parade with US Army Chief of Staff General Malin Craig

© Getty

From its inception on 20 May 1902, the Republic of Cuba was destined to exist in the long shadow of its powerful neighbour, the United States. In fact, within a year of Cuba's independence, the US Congress passed the Platt Amendment, asserting the right to intervene in Cuba's internal affairs as it saw fit.

When revolution came to Cuba in the 1950s, the government of strongman Fulgencio Batista was toppled, and the Marxist regime of Fidel Castro emerged in its place. The outcome, although predictable, was the least favourable for the United States in terms of maintaining a bulwark against communist influence in the western hemisphere. However, it was America's own failed policy toward Cuba that provided momentum for the revolution. Ironically, the United States – the great bastion of freedom and democracy – had supported Batista, a ruthless, murderous, corrupt and repressive dictator. Could the outcome have been different? The debate rages.

Batista had risen to power initially during the 1930s when the US sought an individual to form a stable government in the midst of the Great Depression and continuing civil unrest. Engineering the 1933 Revolt of the Sergeants, Batista, a well-connected Cuban Army sergeant, ousted President Ramón Grau San Martin and subsequently ruled Cuba through a succession of puppet presidents. He won the presidency outright in 1944 and supported the progressive constitution of 1940 while allowing varied constituencies, including the communists, to participate in the government. When his term expired in 1948, Batista relinquished the presidency peacefully, retiring to Daytona Beach, Florida, and spending time at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York.

The Cuban road to revolution was destined to wind through Washington, DC. Batista had cultivated a strong relationship with the US government while president and maintained close ties to associates within Cuba. While telling reporters that he felt safer in the United States than in his homeland, Batista was elected in absentia to the Cuban congress in 1948. Meanwhile, his connections to American industrialists and business moguls strengthened, along with his ties to organised crime.

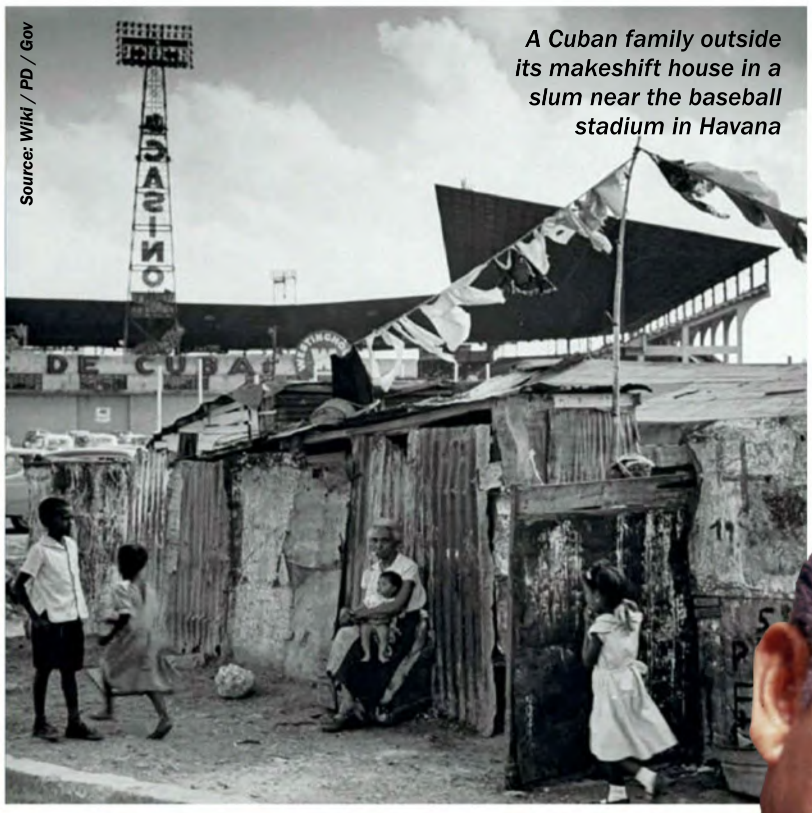
Historians have speculated whether Batista possessed a true long view of opportunities to exploit the Cuban people for personal gain or whether he was an opportunist who laid a foundation of corruption and ruthlessness to line his own pockets, leveraging ever-shifting American foreign policy for his own benefit in the process. Regardless, as the Cuban political situation remained restive, Batista chose to run for president again in 1952. The polls, however, were troubling. By late 1951, he was a distant third behind Roberto Agramonte of the Orthodox Party and Authentic Party candidate Carlos Hevia.

Facing his political Rubicon, Batista acted decisively. His army henchmen forced President Carlos Prio Socarrás to resign and seized military installations across Cuba. Batista cancelled the upcoming elections, suspended the constitution of 1940, and outlawed all political parties.

Turning an apparent blind eye to the means by which Batista achieved power, President Dwight D Eisenhower and the US government recognised the new Cuban regime within days of the coup d'etat. For the United States, Batista represented a loyal friend who brought stability to the troubled island despite actions that contradicted those of his first term as president. He would surely protect American investment in Cuba, and most importantly he would fend off communist inroads in Latin America. Jumbled amid such optimism, the seeds of American foreign policy failure were planted.

Batista elevated corruption to an art form. He invited American investment in hotels and casinos, allying closely with well-known organised crime figures Meyer Lansky, Santo Trafficante and others, skimming up to 30 percent of the take from their gambling enterprises. Drugs, influence peddling and the sex trade were additional sources of revenue for Batista and his cronies, who garnered immense wealth while the average Cuban family earned $6 a week and unemployment hovered around 15-20 percent. Batista's soldiers routinely kidnapped dissenters, snatching them from their beds, murdering them in the night and displaying their bodies at roadsides at sunrise as a warning.

By 1953, however, a young attorney, Fidel Castro, had fanned the flames of hatred for Batista and the complicit American government. By the end of the decade, Castro and Marxist Cuba would be the sworn enemies of the United States. In retrospect, by the time US officials realised that they had made a pact with the devil, the situation was irretrievable – the proverbial genie was out of the bottle.



Source: Wiki / PD / Gov

A Cuban family outside its makeshift house in a slum near the baseball stadium in Havana

> “DRUGS, INFLUENCE PEDDLING AND THE SEX TRADE WERE ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF REVENUE FOR BATISTA AND HIS CRONIES”

Appearing to live a life of leisure in this 1959 photo, Fulgencio Batista, former president of Cuba, reads a newspaper

© Getty

CUBA & THE MOB

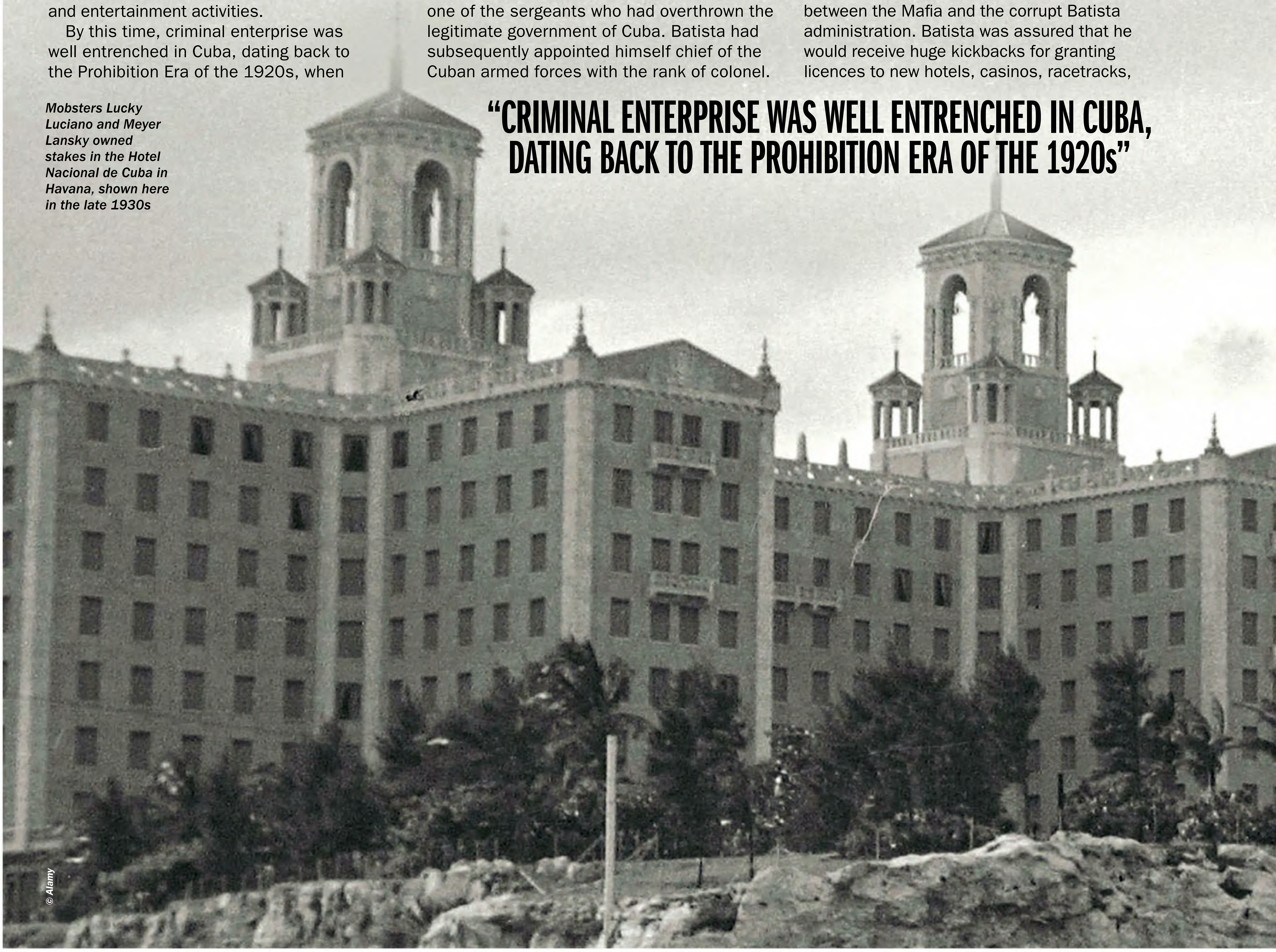
The influence of organised crime fuelled the excesses of Batista's Cuba and hastened the rise of the Marxist revolt that followed under Fidel Castro

During the week of 22 December 1946, a who's who of organised crime in the United States and Italy gathered at the Hotel Nacional de Cuba in Havana. The so-called Havana Conference was a watershed event in the history of the criminal underworld in the Americas. The meeting was called by gangster kingpin Charles 'Lucky' Luciano and organised by his longtime associate Meyer Lansky. Among the topics discussed was the Mafia's future plans for continuing domination of the island country's lucrative illicit business and entertainment activities.

By this time, criminal enterprise was well entrenched in Cuba, dating back to the Prohibition Era of the 1920s, when the country was a frequent sanctuary and embarkation point for boats running rum and other contraband liquor to the United States, a mere 145km to the north, from outside US territorial waters. Following the 1933 Revolt of the Sergeants, new and greater opportunities emerged. Luciano reportedly dispatched Lansky to Cuba with $3 million to bribe the leader of the country's armed forces, buying his cooperation in expanding criminal activity to include hotels, casinos, nightclubs, drug trafficking and prostitution. The target of the bribe was none other than Fulgencio Batista, one of the sergeants who had overthrown the legitimate government of Cuba. Batista had subsequently appointed himself chief of the Cuban armed forces with the rank of colonel.

A decade later, Batista had become the de facto leader of Cuba, later ascending to its presidency, and the tentacles of organised crime had steadily stretched throughout the island's economy. Lansky and Batista were closely associated, actually partners in the ownership of the Hotel Nacional, and when Luciano arrived in Havana for the high-level meeting, he invested $150,000 in the property and also became a partner. Reportedly, a subsequent discussion between Lansky and Batista at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York laid the foundation for deeper cooperation between the Mafia and the corrupt Batista administration. Batista was assured that he would receive huge kickbacks for granting licences to new hotels, casinos, racetracks,

> **"CRIMINAL ENTERPRISE WAS WELL ENTRENCHED IN CUBA, DATING BACK TO THE PROHIBITION ERA OF THE 1920s"**



Mobsters Lucky Luciano and Meyer Lansky owned stakes in the Hotel Nacional de Cuba in Havana, shown here in the late 1930s

© Alamy

Images: Wiki / PD / Gov

and nightclubs – in exchange for essentially granting Lansky a free hand to further exploit the Cuban economy, reaping tremendous profits. Through the coming years, Batista's Swiss bank accounts were also believed to have received millions of dollars.

Meanwhile Luciano, who had been deported to Italy from the United States and banned from reentering the US, secretly moved to Cuba. For a time, he was directly involved in the illicit activities; however, once US authorities discovered that he had violated the terms of his parole and deportation agreement brokered for his cooperation with the Allied war effort during World War II, they demanded his return to Italy. In 1947, Luciano was arrested and booked on a freighter sailing to Genoa.

Nevertheless, after the Havana Conference, business boomed. The Cuban capital became a mecca for pleasure seekers from the United States, including prominent elected officials such as senator and future US president John F Kennedy and entertainers including Frank Sinatra, Eartha Kitt, George Raft and many others. During the 1950s, an estimated 270 brothels operated in Havana, hotels and nightclubs were packed with tourists, and gambling dens were beehives of activity, while the trade in marijuana and heroin flourished. Cuba became a way station for drugs transported illegally from South and Central America to the United States.

American author David Detzer visited Havana and observed: "Government officials received bribes, policemen collected protection money. Prostitutes could be seen standing in doorways, strolling the streets, or leaning from windows. One report estimated that 11,500 of them worked their trade in Havana. Beyond the outskirts of the capital, beyond the slot machines, was one of the poorest, and most beautiful countries in the Western world."

While Luciano, Lansky and other organised crime figures made millions, their lavish life led to their demise in Cuba. Inevitably, the exploitation of the Cuban people came with its own price. Batista had apparently lined his pockets with the tacit approval of the US government, and hatred for the corrupt regime and its American benefactors erupted in Fidel Castro's Marxist revolution.

When Castro's fighters finally reached Havana on 1 January 1959 the hotels and casinos were deserted. The days of decadence and hedonism were over and the reign of organised crime in Cuba came to an abrupt end.

Left, top: *Charles 'Lucky' Luciano, an organised crime boss, presided over the Havana Conference held in the Cuban capital in 1946*

Left: *Meyer Lansky was a major organised crime figure and key player in the rise of criminal activity in Cuba*

Below: *Tourists swim and sunbathe at the elegant pool of the Hotel Nacional de Cuba in this image from the 1950s*

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DICTATORS & REVOLUTIONARIES

The Cuban Revolution was fought by men characterised by ambition and ruthlessness but split between brilliance, courage and corruption

On 2 January 1959, The Guardian newspaper described Castro as having "a magnetic personality, is a good speaker and always fights in the front line with his men"

© Getty

FIDEL CASTRO

THE CONTROVERSIAL LEADER OF THE REVOLUTION AGAINST FULGENCIO BATISTA WHO WON A GUERRILLA WAR AND TOOK POWER AGAINST OVERWHELMING ODDS

1926-2016, **26 JULY MOVEMENT**

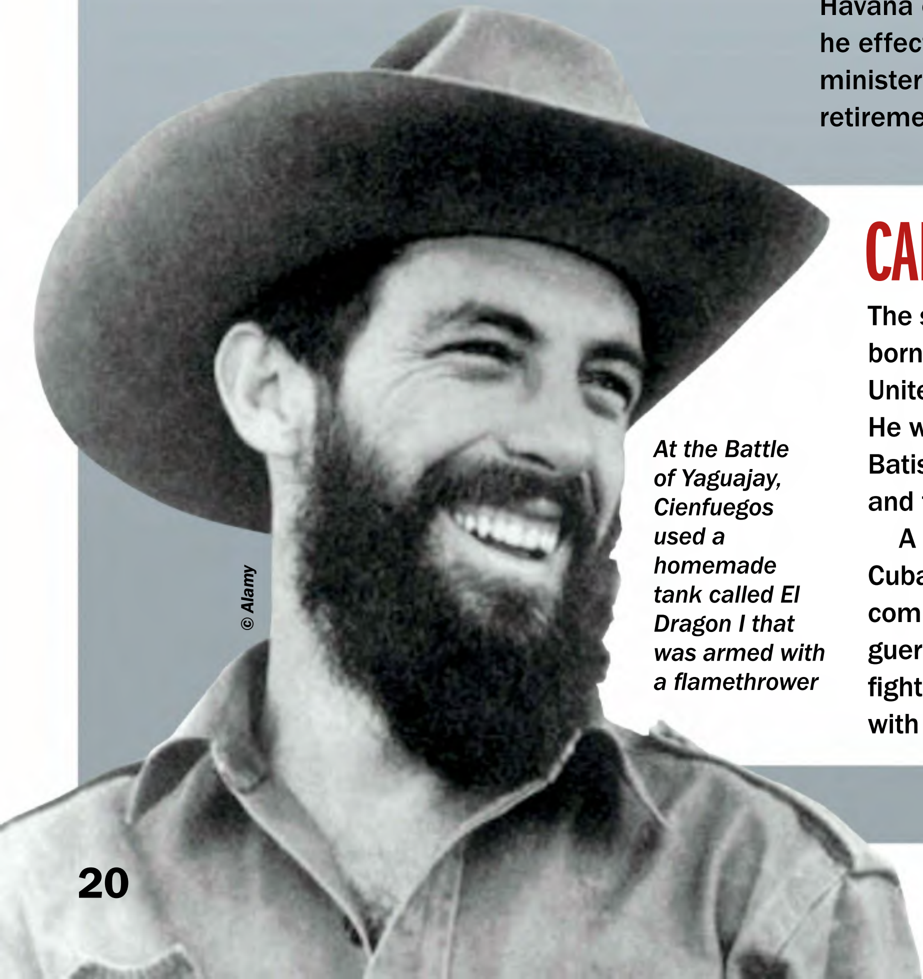
Through his integral role in the Cuban Revolution, Castro became an unlikely international figure whose force of personality overthrew a regime. This led to Cuba becoming a key battleground of the Cold War where the United States and Soviet Union fought for geopolitical dominance over Castro. It was a role Castro both encouraged and vigorously fought against.

Born to a Spanish land-owning father and Cuban mother, Castro trained as a lawyer and was soon noted for his oratorical abilities. He was involved in plots to overthrow governments in both Cuba and the Dominican Republic but his real ascent to prominence occurred after Fulgencio Batista came to power in 1952. A committed socialist, Castro vowed to overthrow the pro-American Batista regime and formed the 26 July Movement. After a failed attack on the Moncada Barracks in July 1953, he was captured and imprisoned for 19 months.

Castro was further radicalised by Marxist ideology in prison and joined forces with Che Guevara in Mexico in 1955. Leading a small band of revolutionaries, he sailed to Cuba in 1956 to start a guerrilla campaign against Batista. Operating from the Sierra Maestra Mountains, Castro spent 1957-58 spearheading a remarkable campaign where the greatly outnumbered guerrillas survived and eventually began winning against government forces.

He developed an improvised war infrastructure in Sierra Maestra by controlling key utilities and played to the international press to make it appear that he led a large army in the mountains. Although he was a Marxist-Leninist, Castro publicly appeared less radical to appeal to more revolutionaries.

During Operation Verano in June-August 1958, Castro defeated Cuban Army forces much larger than his own by using land mines and ambushes. He also won the Battles of La Plata and Las Mercedes before launching his own offensive out of the mountains. After gaining control of Oriente and Villa Clara provinces, Castro was able to enter Havana on 8 January 1959. From that time he effectively ruled Cuba, first as prime minister and then president, until his retirement in 2008.



At the Battle of Yaguajay, Cienfuegos used a homemade tank called El Dragon I that was armed with a flamethrower

© Alamy

CAMILO CIENFUEGOS THE 'HERO OF YAGUAJAY' 1932-59, **26 JULY MOVEMENT**

The son of Spanish immigrants, Cienfuegos was born in Havana and worked for a short while in the United States before he became a revolutionary. He was radicalised after being shot in the leg by Batista's police during a student demonstration and travelled to Mexico to befriend Fidel Castro.

A member of the 'Granma' invasion of Cuba, Cienfuegos was promoted to the rank of commandante by Castro and given command of guerrillas in the northern Villa Clara province. The fighting in Villa Clara was extremely gruelling, with Cienfuegos's men travelling by night to avoid Batista's soldiers. He won a notable victory at the Battle of Yaguajay in December 1958 against a Cuban Army garrison and became known as the 'Hero of Yaguajay'.

Cienfuegos went on to help Che Guevara capture Santa Clara and became chief-of-staff of the new Cuban Army. A charismatic figure, Cienfuegos disappeared in a plane crash on 28 October 1959. There has been speculation that Castro was jealous of his popularity and covertly ordered his assassination, but his death was most likely an accident.

RAÚL CASTRO

FIDEL CASTRO'S YOUNGER BROTHER WHO SUCCEEDED HIM AS PRESIDENT

1931-PRESENT, **26 JULY MOVEMENT**

A student of social sciences at Havana University, Raúl Castro became a committed socialist. Always close to his elder brother Fidel, Raúl participated in the attack on the Moncada Barracks and later befriended Che Guevara in Mexico. It was Raúl who introduced Guevara to Fidel and joined the famous pair in their 'Granma' invasion of Cuba.

Castro was given command of a rebel column by his brother to open an eastern front in the Oriente province. He was therefore not involved in Fidel and Guevara's famous battles during Operation Verano but he kidnapped dozens of Americans, including 24 US servicemen from Guantanamo Bay. Raúl treated the Americans well and slowly released them but their capture increased US support for Batista.

By late 1958, Raúl was conducting operations across Oriente and linked up with Fidel. The brothers proceeded to capture Santiago de Cuba without bloodshed and soon entered Havana on 8 January 1959. After the revolution, Raúl remained his brother's right-hand man for decades and succeeded him as president of Cuba from 2006 to 2018.

As of February 2021, Raúl Castro is still the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba and remains the country's de facto head of state

© Getty

ERNESTO 'CHE' GUEVARA

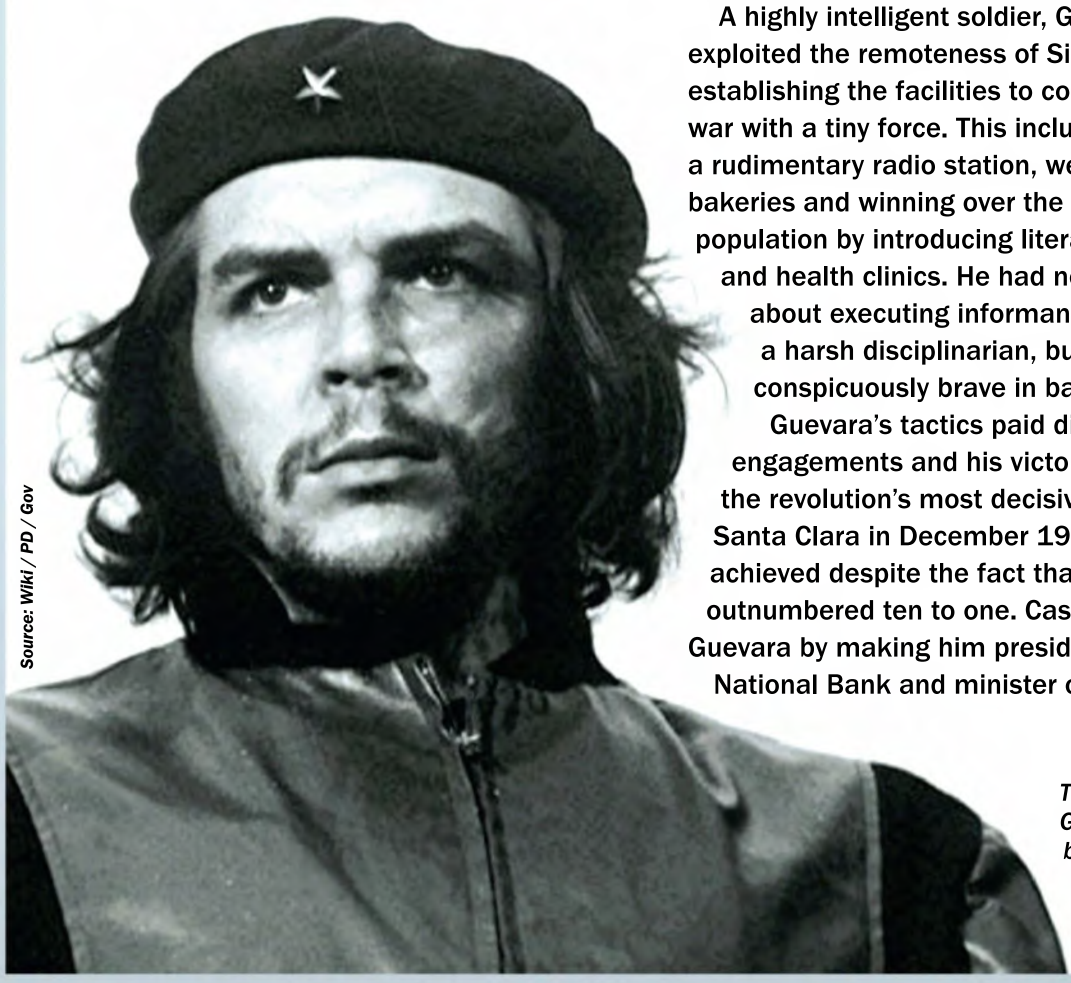
THE ICONIC REVOLUTIONARY WHO WAGED GUERRILLA WARFARE AGAINST BATISTA'S FORCES

1928-67, **26 JULY MOVEMENT**

An Argentinean medic, Guevara became a revolutionary Marxist after his travels through Central and South America. After meeting Fidel Castro and joining the 26 July Movement, he played a key role during the subsequent invasion of Cuba. Acting as Castro's second-in-command, Guevara operated independently in the Sierra Maestra Mountains.

A highly intelligent soldier, Guevara exploited the remoteness of Sierra Maestra by establishing the facilities to conduct a guerrilla war with a tiny force. This included constructing a rudimentary radio station, weapons factories, bakeries and winning over the local rural population by introducing literacy programmes and health clinics. He had no compunction about executing informants and was a harsh disciplinarian, but was also conspicuously brave in battle.

Guevara's tactics paid dividends in engagements and his victories included the revolution's most decisive battle at Santa Clara in December 1958. This was achieved despite the fact that his men were outnumbered ten to one. Castro rewarded Guevara by making him president of Cuba's National Bank and minister of industry.



Source: Wiki / PD / Gov

This famous photo of Guevara was taken by Alberto Korda at the La Coubre Memorial Service, 5 March 1960

FULGENCIO BATISTA

THE MILITARY DICTATOR WHOSE BRUTAL REGIME SPARKED THE REVOLUTION

1901-73, **REPUBLIC OF CUBA**

Unlike the Castro brothers, Fulgencio Batista had humble origins and joined the Cuban Army in 1921 as a private. When he was a sergeant he led an uprising in 1933 that overthrew the Cuban government and enormously increased his political standing. Rising to the rank of colonel, he subsequently became president of Cuba in 1940. Batista governed Cuba effectively during his first term (1940-44) but when he regained the presidency in 1952 after a military coup he became a brutal dictator.

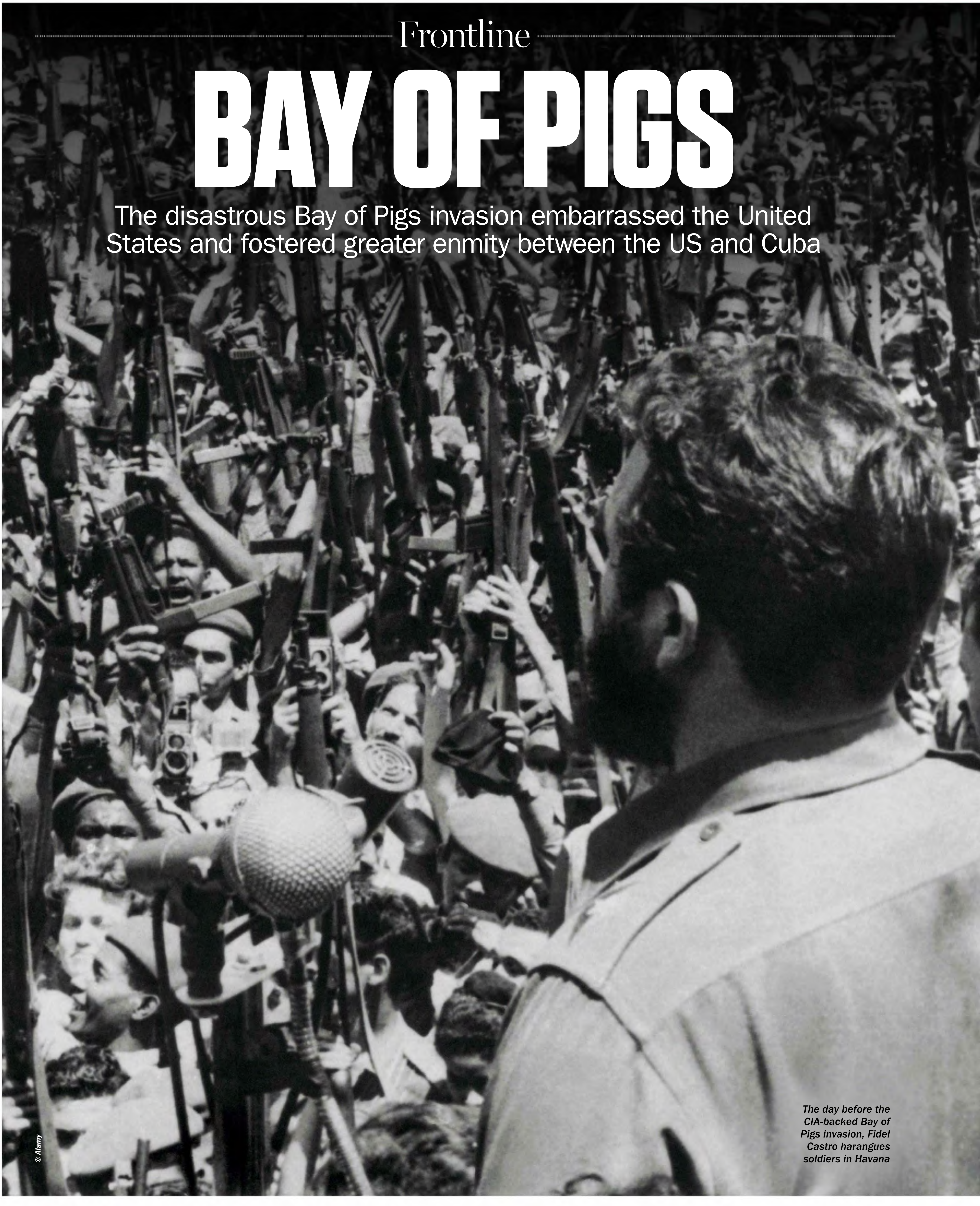
His 1950s regime was characterised by suppression, corruption and pro-American policies – all of which contributed to the outbreak of revolution. Despite US assistance and an army that was much larger than the revolutionaries, Batista bungled the military campaign against the insurgents. His officer corps had been largely purged of talent while his soldiers and police violently suppressed the Cuban population. His popularity plummeted and he fled Cuba on 1 January 1959 after the Battle of Santa Clara.

© Getty

Batista died of a heart attack in Spain just two days before assassins, authorised by Fidel Castro, were about to carry out a plan to kill him

BAY OF PIGS

The disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion embarrassed the United States and fostered greater enmity between the US and Cuba



The day before the CIA-backed Bay of Pigs invasion, Fidel Castro harangues soldiers in Havana

© Alamy

It was over in a day. Brigade 2506, a force of 1,400 Cuban expatriates, had failed miserably in its mission to wrest control of the island nation from the Marxist regime of Fidel Castro. Its 17 April 1961 landing at the Bay of Pigs on the southern shore of Cuba had been crushed by more than 20,000 government soldiers, while tactical support from its American sponsors was conspicuously absent.

A preposterous proposition

Following the seizure of power by Castro on 1 January 1959, the new Marxist government swiftly nationalised the assets of American companies and looked to the Soviet Union for ideological and economic support.

Although the US government had monitored events in Cuba as the unstable regime of President Fulgencio Batista teetered on the precipice of collapse, the Marxist takeover was alarming. President Dwight D Eisenhower feared the Castro government would provide a bridgehead for Soviet influence in the western hemisphere. In March 1960, Eisenhower authorised the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the State Department to develop a plan to oust Castro in favour of a pro-US government.

Within weeks of presidential approval, the CIA established training camps in Guatemala and supplied the fighters of the Cuban Revolutionary Council with weapons and equipment. José Miró Cardona, a disillusioned former member of Castro's government now leading the exiles, was poised to take over as provisional president. In January 1961, President John F Kennedy inherited the CIA plan and, with assurances that it could be carried out covertly with no obvious link to the US, allowed the operation to proceed.

An inept intelligence effort

During the planning and execution of the Bay of Pigs invasion, the CIA failed to live up to its billing as a first-rate intelligence agency. Maintaining the illusion of a clandestine operation was futile. The preparations became an open secret among the expatriate communities of South Florida. Inevitably, Castro also became aware of the threat, possibly as early as the autumn of 1960.

An amphibious landing was to take place at the Bay of Pigs while a diversion on Cuba's eastern coast would create confusion and a paratrooper insertion would temporarily hold Cuban troops at bay. Meanwhile, the main landing force would proceed across the island to the town of Matanzas and hold a defensive perimeter, facilitating the arrival of officials from Florida to establish the new government. Success depended on two assumptions – the element of surprise and the rise of the Cuban people against Castro. Neither occurred.

Botched on the beach

On the morning of 17 April, the situation rapidly deteriorated. A pre-emptive air strike two days earlier, utilising CIA-supplied obsolete B-26 bombers painted to look like Cuban Air Force planes, was intended to cripple Castro's air capability but failed to inflict much damage, probably because he was warned and relocated his planes. As landing craft approached the beach at the Bay of Pigs an undetected radio station broadcast news of the invasion across Cuba in real time.

From the outset, the invaders were subjected to heavy fire from the beach, while Cuban Air Force planes bombed and strafed. Two escort vessels were sunk, landing craft ran aground on coral reefs, and the airborne insertion occurred in the wrong place. Within 24 hours, Castro amassed overwhelming force and Brigade 2506 was compelled to surrender, with 114 dead and over 1,100 captured.

Embarrassment and repercussions

The failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion was a colossal humiliation for the Kennedy administration, occurring less than three months after he took office. Prisoners were held in Cuba for 20 months, their release finally secured in December 1962 in exchange for $53 million of baby food and medicine.

By that time, the world's superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, had reached and stepped back from the brink of nuclear war during the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962. No doubt the failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion had emboldened the Soviets and their client Castro to further challenge US resolve.

When the survivors of Brigade 2506 returned to the US, President Kennedy met with them in Miami and received the unit's tattered banner. He promised, "I can assure you that this flag will be returned to this brigade in a free Havana." Such an event has yet to take place.

KENNEDY, CASTRO AND CAUTION

Any real opportunity for the Bay of Pigs invasion to succeed would have required the full commitment of US military might

The fiasco of the Bay of Pigs invasion has been described as both "too much" and "not enough". The operation was too large to keep secret and too small for a realistic chance of success. When President Kennedy examined the CIA plan, his concerns that overt American participation might lead to Soviet intervention and spark World War III trumped his desire to topple the Marxist regime of Fidel Castro in Cuba. Kennedy declined to forcefully intervene as the long days of mid-April 1961 wore on. After the pre-emptive air strike intended to cripple Castro's air force failed, photos of the CIA-supplied planes were published, revealing early US involvement in the abortive operation. Kennedy cancelled a follow-up mission. On 19 April, he authorised an umbrella of six unmarked US fighter planes to cover another air attack, but a rendezvous with expatriate bombers was bungled.

OVERT U.S. PARTICIPATION MIGHT LEAD TO SOVIET INTERVENTION AND SPARK WORLD WAR III

Fidel Castro reportedly led forces at the Bay of Pigs from this Soviet SU-100 tank destroyer

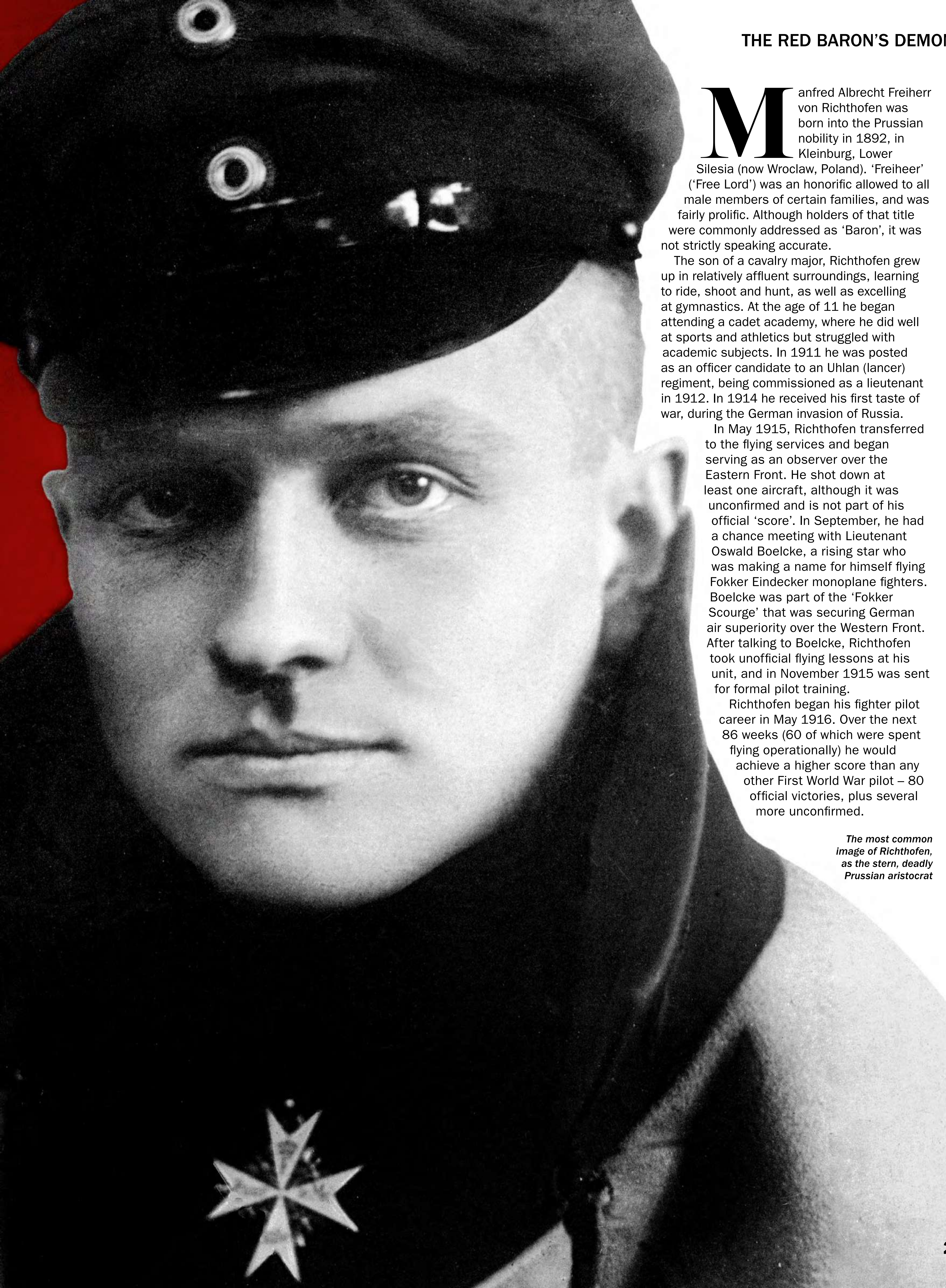
Image: Wiki / CC / Tony Hisgett

THE RED BARON'S DEMONS

Manfred von Richthofen is probably the most famous First World War fighter pilot. But beyond his exploits as the highest-scoring ace of the war, there is little widely known about the man himself, his motivations and personal struggles as his wartime experiences took their toll

WORDS: **STUART HADAWAY**

Richthofen is most commonly associated with an all-red Fokker Triplane, but in truth he only scored nine victories in such an aircraft



Manfred Albrecht Freiherr von Richthofen was born into the Prussian nobility in 1892, in Kleinburg, Lower Silesia (now Wroclaw, Poland). 'Freiheer' ('Free Lord') was an honorific allowed to all male members of certain families, and was fairly prolific. Although holders of that title were commonly addressed as 'Baron', it was not strictly speaking accurate.

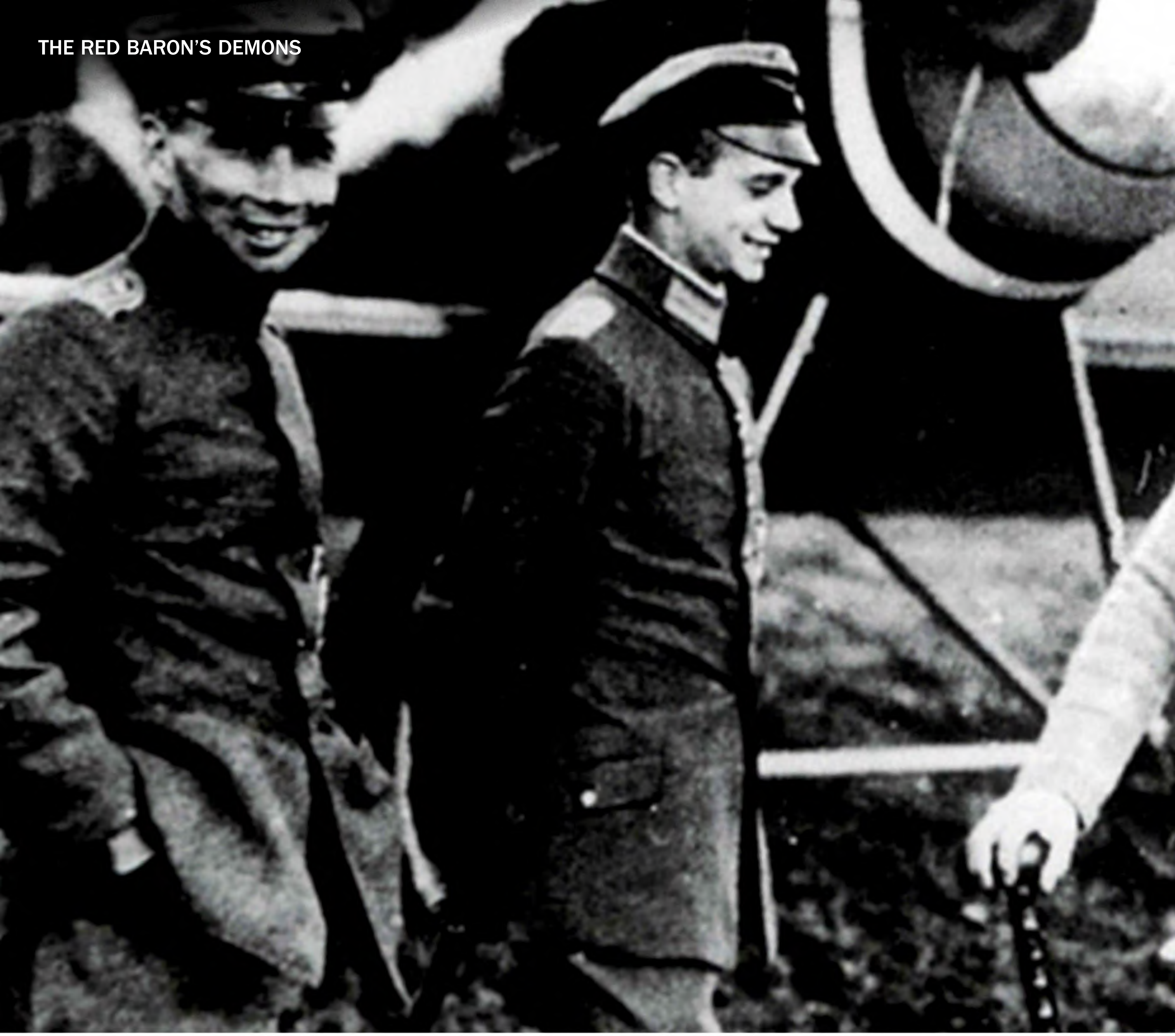
The son of a cavalry major, Richthofen grew up in relatively affluent surroundings, learning to ride, shoot and hunt, as well as excelling at gymnastics. At the age of 11 he began attending a cadet academy, where he did well at sports and athletics but struggled with academic subjects. In 1911 he was posted as an officer candidate to an Uhlan (lancer) regiment, being commissioned as a lieutenant in 1912. In 1914 he received his first taste of war, during the German invasion of Russia.

In May 1915, Richthofen transferred to the flying services and began serving as an observer over the Eastern Front. He shot down at least one aircraft, although it was unconfirmed and is not part of his official 'score'. In September, he had a chance meeting with Lieutenant Oswald Boelcke, a rising star who was making a name for himself flying Fokker Eindecker monoplane fighters. Boelcke was part of the 'Fokker Scourge' that was securing German air superiority over the Western Front. After talking to Boelcke, Richthofen took unofficial flying lessons at his unit, and in November 1915 was sent for formal pilot training.

Richthofen began his fighter pilot career in May 1916. Over the next 86 weeks (60 of which were spent flying operationally) he would achieve a higher score than any other First World War pilot – 80 official victories, plus several more unconfirmed.

The most common image of Richthofen, as the stern, deadly Prussian aristocrat

Images © Getty



Jasta Boelcke

Richthofen spent several months flying on the Western and Eastern Fronts, achieving at least one more unconfirmed victory. In August 1916 he met Boelcke again, who recognised his raw talent and invited him to join his new fighting squadron, or 'Jasta'. Richthofen joined Jasta 2 (or 'Jasta Boelcke') as it became operational in the Somme region, flying Fokker D.III and Albatros D.I fighters. Over the summer the British Royal Flying Corps (RFC) had defeated the 'Fokker Scourge' with their own new fighter types. For several months the British held air superiority, but now the Germans were determined to win it back.

Boelcke was one of the first pilots to seriously study the art of aerial fighting and develop a doctrine of operations. He drilled the resulting 'Dicta Boelcke' into his pilots. It included such guidance as flying in larger formations than was then normal and carefully positioning yourself (taking particular note of the angle of the Sun) before attacking. Boelcke encouraged his pilots to hold their fire until the last moment to ensure accuracy, and to always plan and keep in mind their escape routes when over enemy territory. This was tactical fighting – thinking through the situation rather than simply diving in as was the common method. His unit thrived, and within weeks Richthofen began to build up his score – three victories by the end of the month, and 15 by the end of the year. By then Boelcke was dead in an aerial collision, but his Dicta would remain the foundation of Richthofen's own growing success. He was determined to continue adding to his victories and set his sights on beating his erstwhile mentor's score.

In January 1917 Richthofen was awarded the coveted Pour le Merite (or Blue Max) medal and posted to command his own squadron, Jasta 11. He drilled his new unit in Boelcke's rules, and rapidly formed them into a deadly fighting force. They were equipped with the new Albatros D.III, the aircraft in which Richthofen would achieve the majority of his victories. At that time the British and French were suffering from problems in developing new aircraft, leaving the Albatros supreme. Richthofen was lucky to have these months of air superiority to build up his experience, and his score.

Always outnumbered, the Germans had adopted a defensive posture in the West. They moved their fighters around the front and set them up temporarily wherever needed. They would patrol in large numbers, dominating the area and achieving local air superiority. The RFC on the other hand had

A less common image of Richthofen: laughing with his comrades

© Alamy

"I AM IN WRETCHED SPIRITS AFTER EVERY AERIAL COMBAT. I BELIEVE THAT... IT IS VERY SERIOUS, VERY GRIM"

an aggressive stance, attempting, despite their inferior aircraft, to dominate the skies over and beyond the front lines. The Germans could afford to hang back, choose whether they wanted to engage, and carefully position themselves before combat. These were tenets of Boelcke's rules, and areas where Richthofen excelled. It's notable that 75 of his 80 victories were in engagements that were initiated by the Germans. Only two were scored in clearly defensive fights, and the remaining three are ambiguous. The Red Baron picked his fights carefully.

In June 1917, Jagdgeschwader 1 (Fighter Wing 1) was formed by grouping four Jastas together. Richthofen, despite having been ordered home on leave at the end of April, was the obvious choice to command it. Returning to France with more pilots to train and larger formations to lead, his success was set to continue despite the gradual clawing back of air superiority by the British, who were finally receiving new and better aircraft. However, his success was curtailed when he was shot down (for the second time) on 6 July and wounded in the head. He returned to the front three weeks later, but in September left again due to continuing headaches. These would continue to plague him, and those close to him maintained that he became moodier after his wounding. This was far from Richthofen's first close call, but combat fatigue seemed to be slowly taking a toll on him. Despite his lengthy periods of leave, the months of stressful combat were leaving their mark.

A further six weeks at home saw him feted as a hero and met by crowds wherever he went, an experience he found increasingly uncomfortable, and it was a relief for him to return to the front. Here, further success seemed to elude him, with just two victories over the next five weeks. He went back on leave for much of December 1917, and toured Russia through January 1918. In February Richthofen was once more at the front. He returned to form with 11 victories in March (five of them in just two days), and another six in April before he was shot down and killed in combat on 21 April 1918.

Richthofen is given a burial with full military honours by his enemies

KNIGHTS OF THE SKY?

Air combat in WWI is mythologised as an honourable fight between gentlemen, but the truth is more complex

A myth pervaded at the time, and since, is that First World War air combat was somehow a chivalric affair. This was partly based on the glowing, propaganda-based press accounts at the time. Tales of gallant single-combat in the skies served as a distraction from the faceless brutality below, and the idea has proven hard to shift. It is undeniable that air combat was based more on personal skill than most other areas of the war, and there was perhaps an illusionary impression that pilots' lives rested mainly on their own individual actions and abilities. The nature of the pilots' battlefield also doubtless had its appeal – flight was romantic and even exotic, and the sky wiped itself clean of the debris and bodies in stark contrast to the horrific conditions in the trenches below.

The myth has survived despite the dreadful realities of the air war, where airmen in highly flammable aircraft and without parachutes faced terrible deaths with every flight. These horrors were amply described in wartime memoirs of Richthofen and others, and even more so in post-war memoirs and fiction (most famously Captain WE Johns' Biggles books, which pull few punches despite being aimed at a youthful audience).

Acts of chivalry did of course occur, especially earlier in the war. Pre-war aviation had been a small international community and a certain fellow-feeling endured. However, this gradually rubbed off with mounting casualties and the growth of the air services. Occasional acts continued to occur more rarely, such as after the death of Oswald Boelcke in October 1916, when the RFC dropped a wreath dedicated to "our brave and chivalrous opponent".

> "THE RFC DROPPED A WREATH DEDICATED TO 'OUR BRAVE AND CHIVALROUS OPPONENT'"

In areas where numbers of aircraft remained small, like the Middle East, this lasted longer. Even into 1918, for example, the air units over Palestine (a handful of squadrons on each side) routinely dropped news of downed pilots to each other, and requested personal effects be dropped for those taken prisoner. One German pilot, Gerhard Felmy, was well known for his message dropping. If he simply flew over a British airfield, the watching personnel knew that the missing crew he was dropping information on had been killed. If he dropped the message and then conducted a 'victory roll' (a celebratory barrel roll), they knew the crew had survived, achieving victory over the common enemies of the pitiless sky and desert.

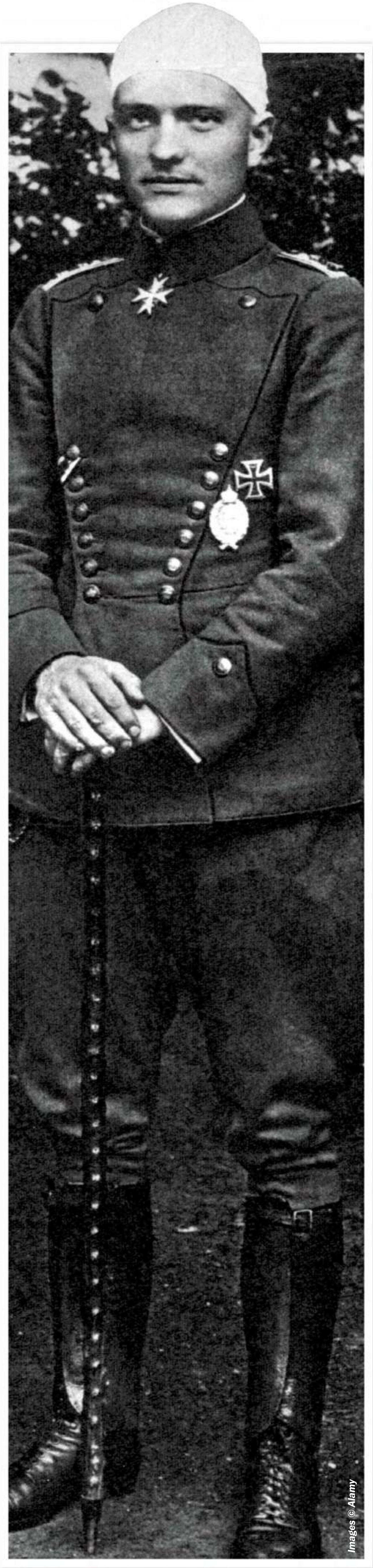
But even the most (supposedly) glorious acts were underlined with harsh and uncompromising reality. On 23 September 1917, German ace Werner Voss encountered a patrol from No. 56 Squadron RFC. Despite being outnumbered 11-to-one, Voss kept engaging the British SE5a's even after an opportunity to escape presented itself. Eventually, after inflicting damage on every SE5a and forcing several down, Voss was caught by a burst from Lieutenant Arthur Rhys-Davids and killed. Returning home, the RFC pilots toasted their gallant enemy and praised his courage, as good 'knights of the air' should. However, their admiration and sense of chivalry had not stopped the eleven of them from relentlessly pursing their single prey until he was shot down and killed.

The making of a legend

Today, the Red Baron is one of the most written about figures of the First World War (after Lawrence of Arabia), and is certainly its most famous pilot. Some accounts are more sensationalist than others, and many focus on his claims, victories and aircraft rather than the man himself. In popular culture he remains well known for his red Fokker Triplane. He somehow inspired a pizza brand in America (whose pilot logo looks nothing like him) and has perennial popularity as Snoopy's adversary in the *Peanuts* cartoon strip. He's appeared in songs and films, with the most recent biopic in 2008, *The Red Baron*, taking significant liberties with the facts (although in fairness it's far from the worst movie about WWI air combat). The real personality of the man, however, remains elusive.

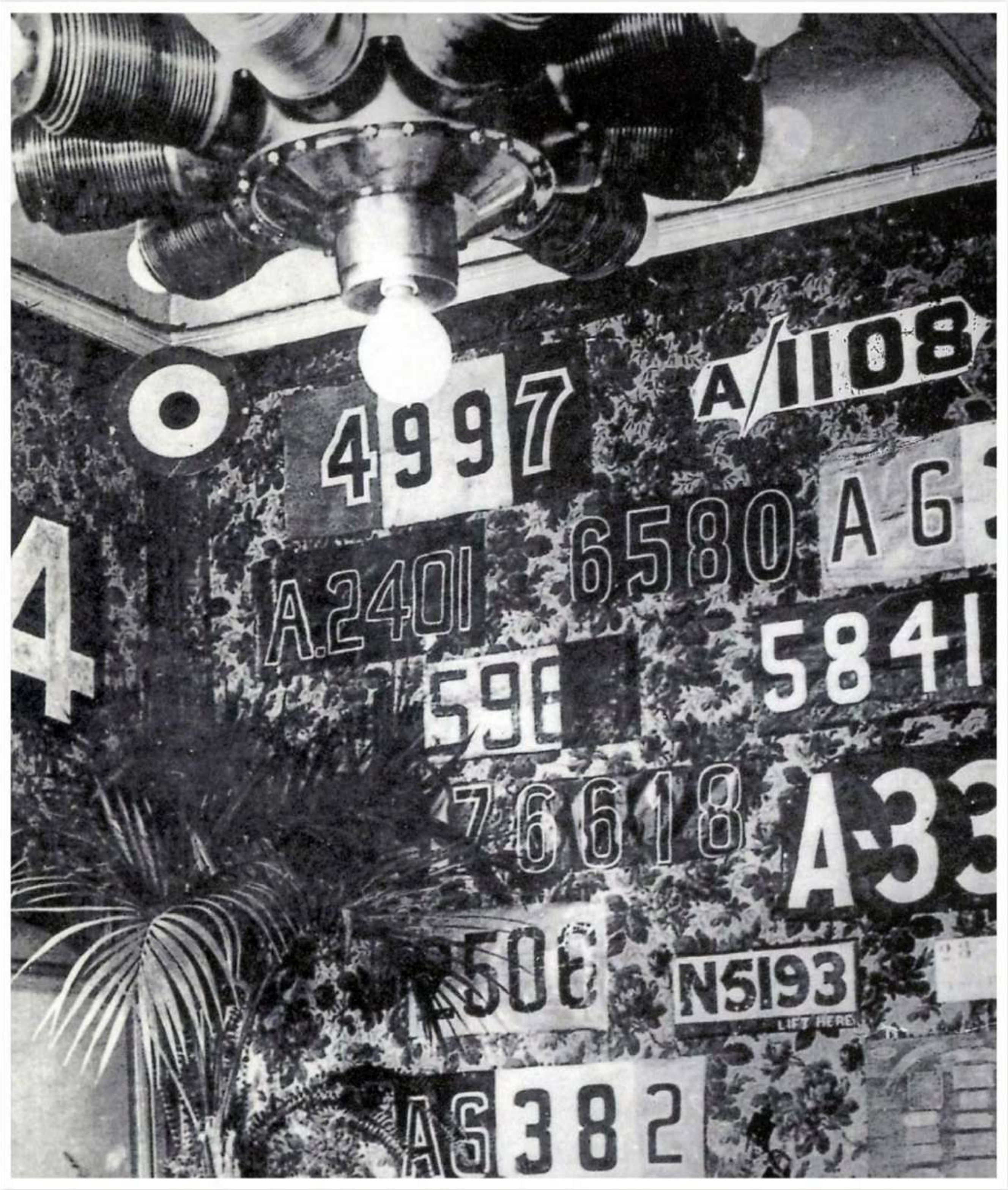
Although Richthofen wrote a memoir, *The Red Air Fighter*, begun during his leave in May 1917, it is not entirely reliable and was written for obvious propaganda purposes, with efforts made to stress the importance of the unglamorous work of the reconnaissance and ground-attack aircraft. It's hard to unpick Richthofen's actual views from those of the propaganda bureau. At times he is contradictory, often describing his joy after a 'kill', and yet in an addendum (admittedly not published until after the war) he added: "I am in wretched spirits after every aerial combat. I believe that… it is very serious, very grim." Other statements are unlikely to be driven by propaganda, such as the fact that he was the sole remaining active airman from the unit he had been an observer with only two years previously. It is hard to dismiss his memoirs out of hand, but equally hard to rely on them as an accurate picture.

Thankfully, some of his pilots have left their own impressions, and these can be surprising. Surviving photos generally show a stern, Teutonic-looking Prussian officer, but his men remembered an approachable man who was always sociable and ready to join in games in the mess. He was also caring towards his younger pilots, which was by no means a typical trait among First World War fighter aces. He showed great interest in them, and devoted time and effort to training them and developing their skills.

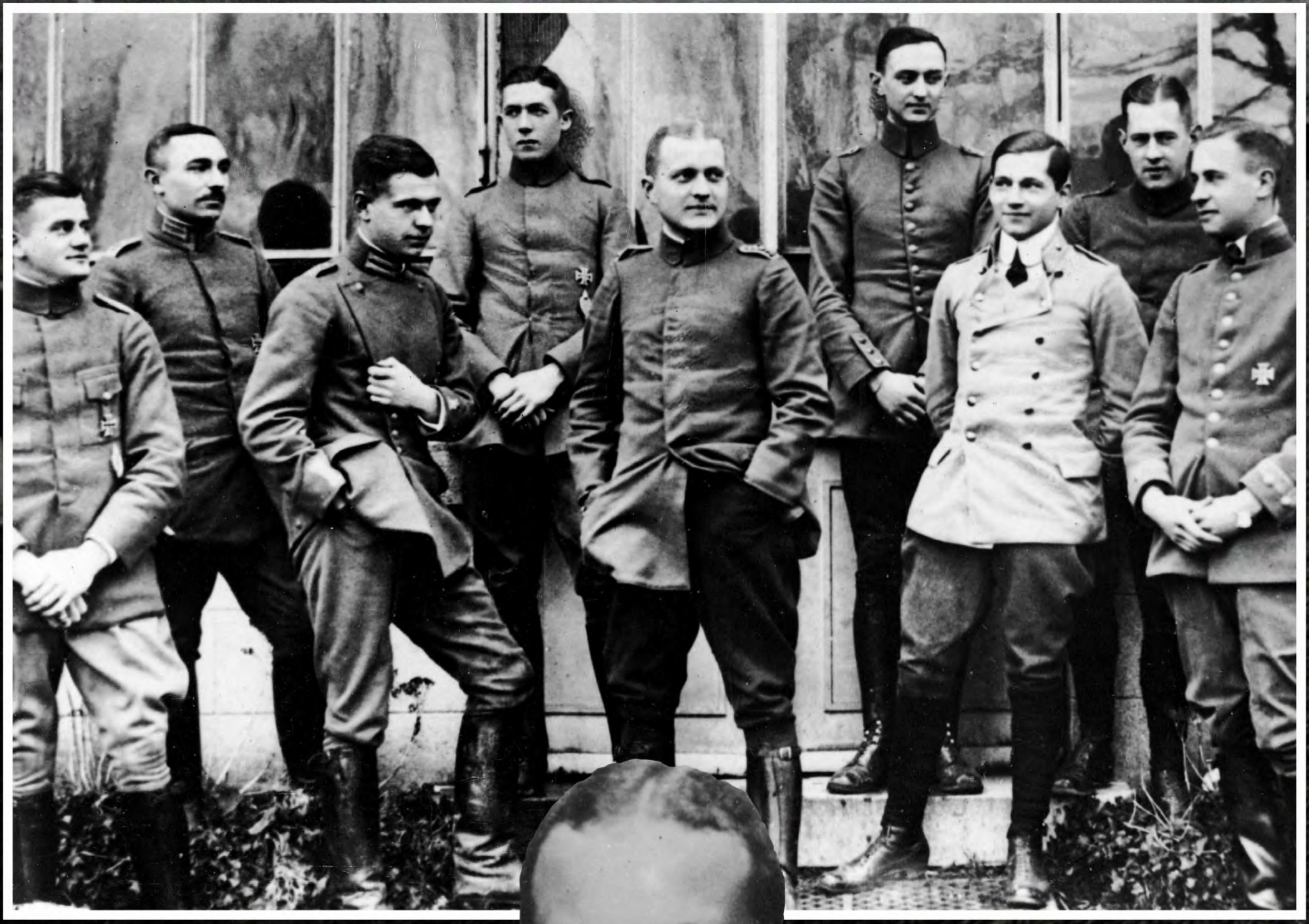


***Right:** Richthofen's head wound left him with recurring headaches and is sometimes said to have led to a more fatalistic attitude, even though it was far from his first close call*

Images © Alamy



***Below:** Richthofen decorated his living quarters with trophies from his kills in the same fashion as game hunters*



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Above: ***Richthofen (centre) pictured with other German officers. The Red Baron's comrades regarded him as an approachable leader who was fiercely devoted to his men***

Left: ***Richthofen stares into the camera with the steely eyed gaze of a ruthless fighter pilot***

Astonishing to some, Richthofen was also far from the world's greatest pilot. He was shot down three times during his career: the first two (on 8 March 1917 and 6 July 1917) by greatly inferior aircraft. At least twice he had very lucky escapes after poor judgement led him to fly through storms. These are important facts, as there is a prevailing view that he was killed while flying in a highly uncharacteristic way, following an enemy down low over the front lines and into an area where he became hemmed in between the land and ground fire and British fighters above. This broke Boelcke's dicta about always having an escape route. In fact, while it is clear that Richthofen was very good at applying cold logic to situations and acting accordingly, he was not above mistakes or rashness. At least twice in 1917 (his 24th and 48th victories) he flew low over the front line areas to secure his kills, and on one occasion (his 33rd victory) he followed his victim down and strafed them on the ground. After 21 March 1918, and the German breakthrough on the Western Front, both sides found themselves regularly flying at low level over highly fluid front lines. On many occasions in the weeks before his death (including while scoring two victories on 27 and 28 March) Richthofen flew at very low level over the front lines. The ever-changing strategic situation made this a necessity.

While Richtofen was not the world's greatest pilot (and the fact he carried a lucky mascot suggests he realised his own vulnerabilities), he was still feared by his opponents. His approach to air combat made him a dangerous adversary, and it was not long before his reputation began to grow. In December 1916 or January 1917 he, perhaps inadvertently at first, started to draw attention to himself by painting parts of his aircraft red. Contrary to popular belief, the Red Baron only flew an all-red Fokker Triplane for nine of his victories. For most of the rest of the war he flew aircraft that were predominantly red – either Triplanes for another 10 of his victories, or an Albatros for the majority of the others. Many of these only had a red fuselage, and soon most of his pilots in Jasta 11 began to follow suit. Each had their own particular pattern, and it was a useful way to identify one another in the air.

By Richthofen's own account, within weeks he was well-known among his enemies, with a downed crew on 24 January stating they had been attacked by a pilot widely known as Le Petit Rouge, and in April another saying their opponent had been Le Diable Rouge. Both of these crews were British, so the translation into French may be dubious, but it is clear that the name Red Baron does not appear

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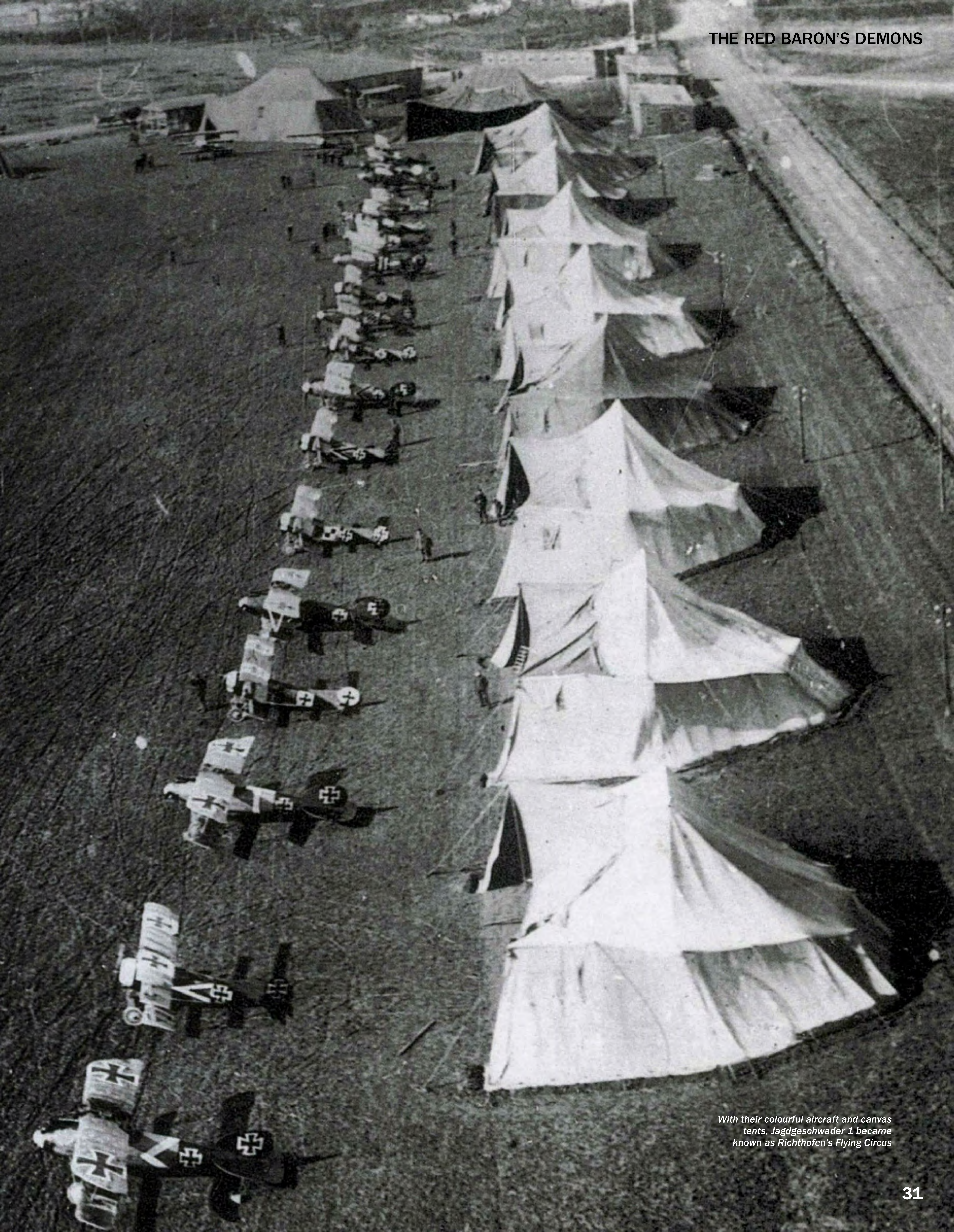


With their colourful aircraft and canvas tents, Jagdgeschwader 1 became known as Richthofen's Flying Circus

Richthofen's casket is re-interred at Invalidenfriedhof Cemetery, Berlin after the end of the war

© Getty

© Alamy

***Left:** Richthofen's aircraft was rapidly stripped for souvenirs after his death*

"THIS WAS BUTCHERY, NOT TO MENTION PURE EGO, WITH A VENGEANCE"

in contemporary accounts, but rather in post-war biographies.

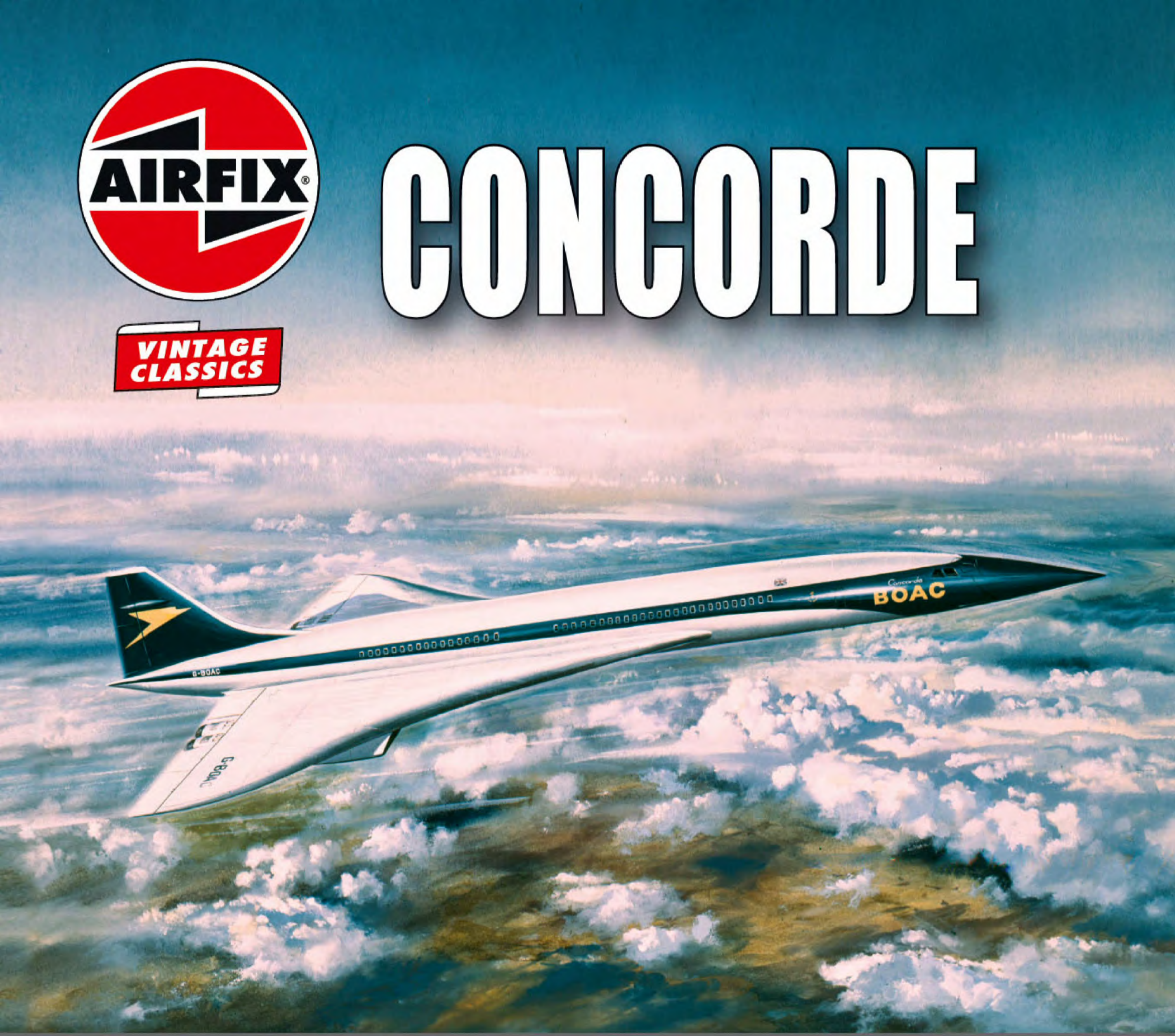
Richthofen's growing reputation almost certainly also appealed to his self-image as a hunter. As an excellent tactician (or stalker, in hunting parlance) and a first-class shot, he was proud of his skills and was determined to show them off. Despite his obvious discomfort with his popularity during his leave periods at home, where he began to actively avoid crowds, he was also keen to promote his reputation as an air fighter. He was determined, for example, to beat his mentor Boelcke's score, and later to maintain his highest scoring status. As a hunter, he took trophies from his victims and ostentatiously displayed them. A famous photo of his living quarters shows walls covered in trophies taken from victories up to and including his 43rd victim, and it is unlikely he stopped there.

Richthofen also avidly collected 'victory cups' ('Ehrenbecher'), silver cups engraved with the dates of his victories. Boelcke had invented the tradition of awarding such cups to each of his pilots when they achieved their first victories. However, Richthofen took the idea further and continued to order them for himself. It is unclear how long he kept this up, as his family home was looted by the Soviets in 1945 and most of the cups have been lost, but there are accounts of cups for his 60th or even 70th victories existing. It is possible that an increasing scarcity of silver in Germany prevented him from ordering a full set, but he was clearly proud of his successes, and saw himself as a great hunter.

In his memoirs he criticises his younger brother Lothar, a fellow pilot whom he considered far too reckless: "My father discriminates between a sportsman and a butcher. The latter shoots for fun. When I have shot down an Englishman, my hunting passion is satisfied for a quarter of an hour. Therefore I do not succeed in shooting down two Englishmen in succession. If one of them comes down, I have the feeling of complete satisfaction. Only much later have I overcome my instinct and have become a butcher."

This self-image was important to him, although once he embraced being a 'butcher' he rarely held back. Those words were written in May or June 1917, and it is true that it had only been in April that he had first brought down more than one aircraft in a day. On 5 April he downed two British aircraft, but on 29 April he had repeatedly taken off, determined to reach a goal of 50 victories before going home on leave. This he did by shooting down two RFC aircraft during the day, but that evening he set out again and shot down a further two to bring his score up to 52. This was butchery, not to mention pure ego, with a vengeance.

Richthofen was a complicated character. This is probably inevitable; after all, he was only human and it's easy to forget that he was also young, dying at the age of 25. His own wishes or instincts were also subordinated to the demands of the war and the situations he found himself in. He was a man who wanted to be recognised as the best, yet shunned public adulation. He was determined to achieve the highest victory score, but spent energy on encouraging and training the potential competitors around him. He was not the greatest pilot, so instead used his other skills – a superb tactical instinct and excellent marksmanship – to fulfil his ambition to become the greatest of the air fighters.



Concord A05170V 1:144

Mould Tools made in 1966,
pack illustration by Roy Cross, 1966 .

Without doubt one of the most famous aircraft in the history of aviation, the Anglo-French BAC/SUD (later BAe/Aerospatiale) Concorde was a supersonic transport aircraft which possessed performance that would put most military fighters to shame. With two prototype aircraft built to prove the viability of supersonic flight for the civilian market, the British Concorde 002 (G-BSST) made its first flight from Filton on 9th April 1969 and joined its French counterpart at the Paris Airshow later the same year, where they both made their debuts. Ultimately, only Air France and British Airways would operate Concorde commercially and even though only 20 aircraft were built, they always represented the ultimate way to fly and a blue riband service for the rich and famous.

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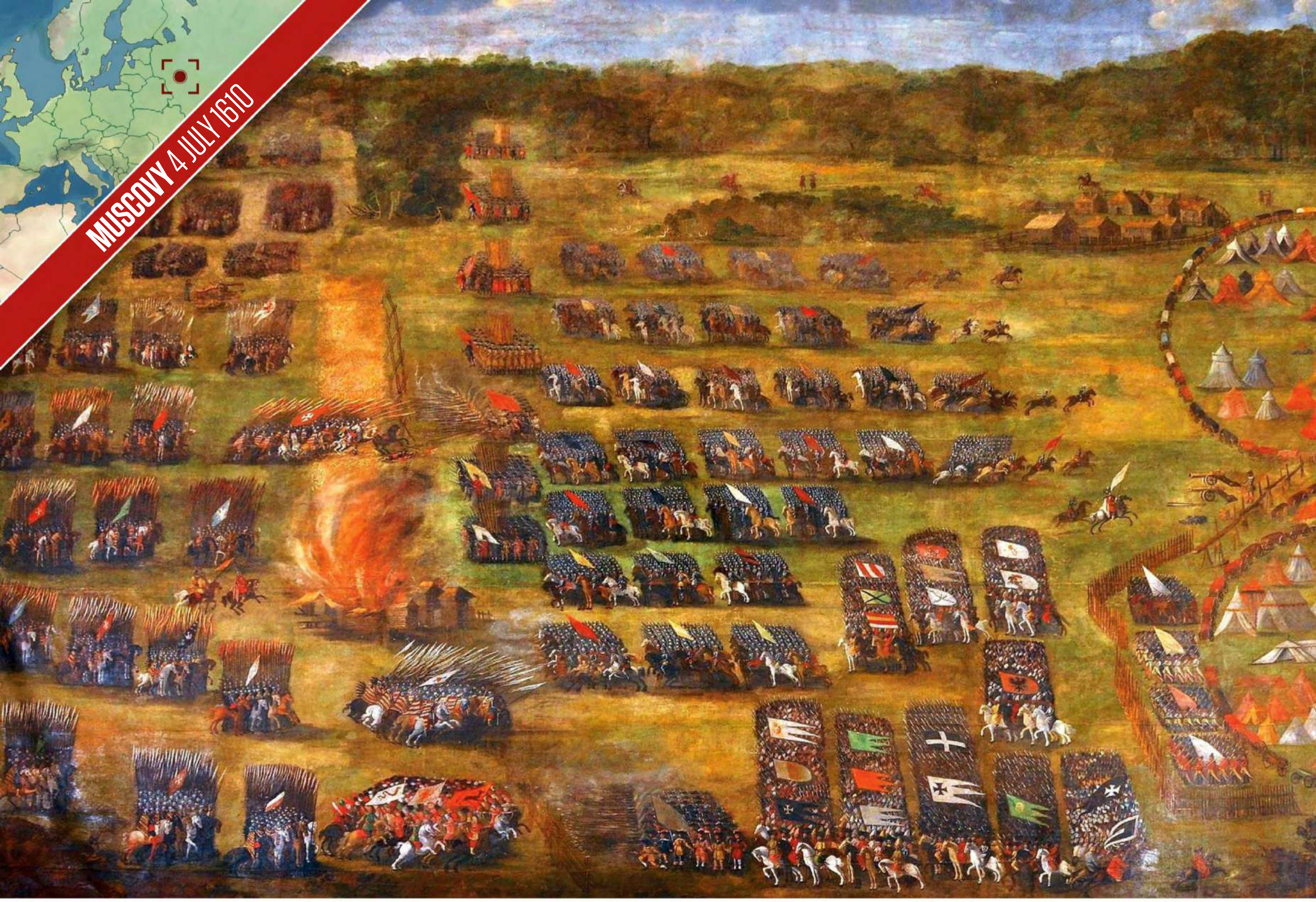
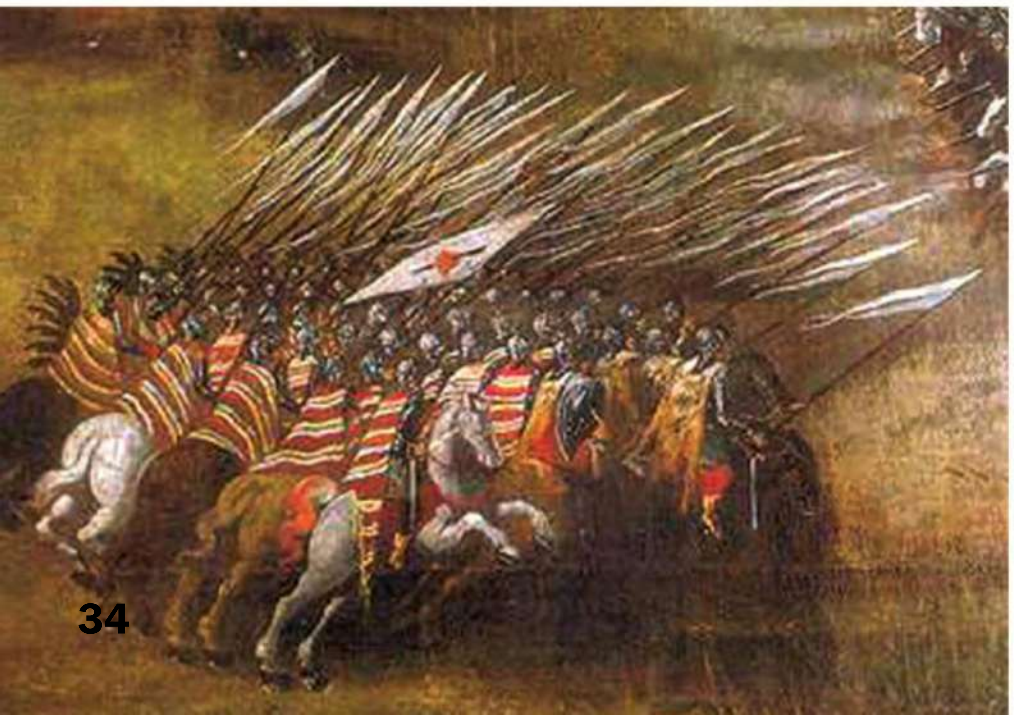


Great Battles

KLUSHINO

An army of elite Polish winged hussars launched a devastating attack against a marching Muscovite army

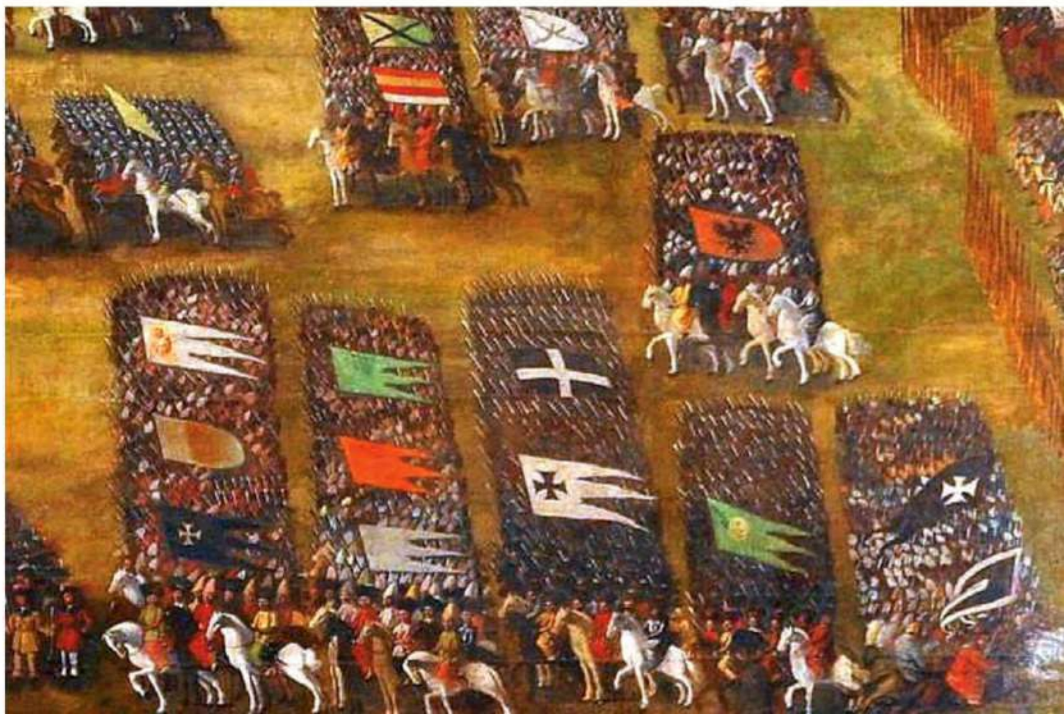
WORDS **WILLIAM E WELSH**



Above: *Companies of Polish hussars attack towards the Swedish-Muscovite camps at right in the opening phase of the battle*

Left: *Polish winged hussars attacked in waves to break the enemy at Klushino*

Right: *Muscovite light cavalry lacked the skill and discipline of their hussar foes*



Polish hussars holding their lances upright emerged at dawn on 4 July 1610 from deep woods on the west bank of the Gzhat River 100 miles east of Moscow. In the faint light, the first to arrive reconnoitred a long fence that blocked their route of attack towards a cluster of small hamlets along the river. Beyond the fence lay their objective, a seemingly endless sea of tents for 36,000 Swedish and Muscovite troops and their camp followers that stretched towards the distant horizon.

Polish Grand Crown Hetman Stanislaw Zolkiewski, the round-faced, moustachioed, elderly Polish hetman commanding the Polish field army, directed his staff to form work parties. They were tasked with smashing holes in the fence for the horsemen to pass through in order to assault the enemy camps. As he did so, the hussars that formed the core of his army arrayed themselves for battle. The men in the camps began to stir, and a regiment of Swedish mercenary arquebusiers raced forward to defend the fence line.

When all of his 5,500 hussars were on hand, Zolkiewski gave the signal for the attack to begin. Kettle drums rumbled and trumpets blared, and hussars poured through the gaps in the fence.

The Swedish arquebusiers fired on the hussars at point-blank range but they could not stop the rushing tide of heavily armoured cavalry. One of the epic clashes of the Polish-Muscovite War (1605 to 1618) had begun.

Time of Troubles

Although a state of undeclared war had existed between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Tsardom of Muscovy since 1605, Polish-Lithuanian King Sigismund III Vasa did not actually declare war on Muscovy until February 1609. The catalyst for the war was Tsar Vasily IV Shuisky's decision to enter into an alliance with King Charles IX of Sweden in order to obtain military assistance in the form of 10,000 professional soldiers.

Vasily IV ruled Muscovy during a protracted succession crisis that resulted in political anarchy known as the Time of Troubles. The succession crisis followed the death of the mentally deficient Tsar Fyodor I in 1598, who was the last in a long line of Rurikid rulers. One of key events of the Time of Troubles was a series of three pretenders to the throne, each of whom claimed to be the Tsarevich Dimitri, the son of Ivan IV whose death as a child in 1591 had been shrouded in secrecy.

The first of the three pretenders, known as False Dimitry I, was believed to have been a defrocked Orthodox monk. He emigrated to the Commonwealth and became a willing pawn of powerful Polish and Lithuanian magnates who wished to unseat Tsar Boris Gudonov, Fyodor's successor, and replace him with the first False Dimitri. Backed by a private army of 3,500 Lithuanians and Cossacks, the first pretender invaded Muscovy in 1604.

When Gudonov died in April 1605, the Muscovites enthroned the first pretender as their new ruler. Tsar Dimitry I doled out prominent court positions not only to Polish and Lithuanian nobles, but also to Jesuit priests. After nearly a year of his pro-Catholic rule, the Eastern Orthodox Muscovites could no longer tolerate Dimitri I. In an uprising that unfolded in May 1606, Dimitri was deposed and slain. Prince Vasily Shuisky, who had led the revolt, installed himself on the throne, but he was unpopular with the majority of Muscovite boyars.

The next pretender, known as False Dimitry II, enjoyed overt support from Sigismund and the Polish monarch sent troops into Muscovy to support him. In addition, thousands of disaffected Zaporozhian Cossacks from Ukraine flocked to his banner. The second pretender established a fortified camp at Tushino, just eight miles from Moscow, and his 18,000 troops soon began clashing with the tsar's army.

OPPOSING FORCES

POLISH-LITHUANIAN COMMONWEALTH ARMY

COMMANDER
Stanislaw Zolkiewski

HEAVY CAVALRY 5,556 **LIGHT CAVALRY** 969
INFANTRY 200 **ARTILLERY** 2 **TOTAL** 6,725

VS

SWEDISH-MUSCOVITE ARMY

COMMANDERS
Dmitry Shuisky & Jacob de la Gardie

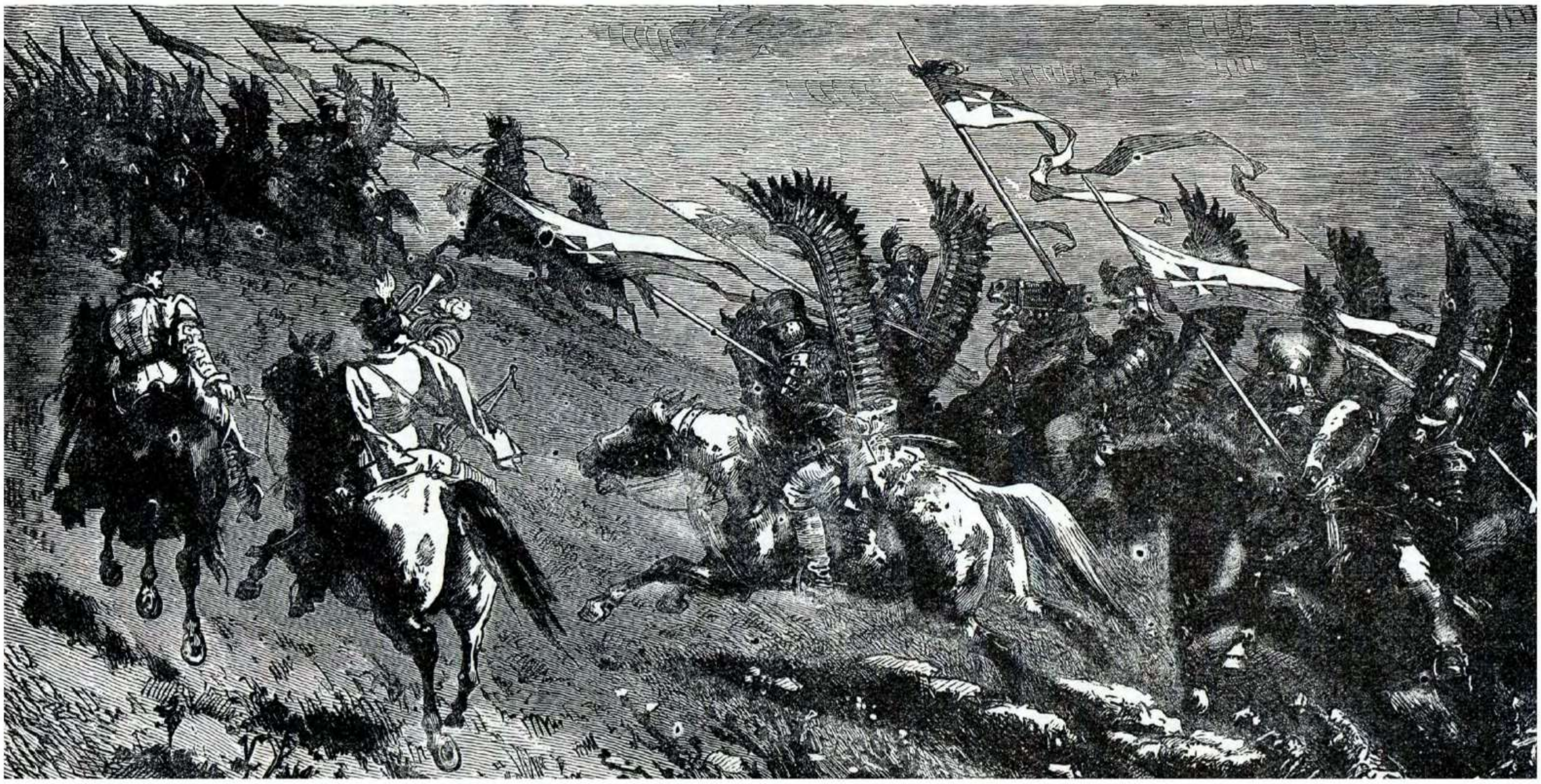
MUSCOVITE ARMY 16,000
SWEDISH ARMY 5,000 **ARTILLERY** 4
CAMP FOLLOWERS 15,000 **TOTAL** 36,000

A case of bad blood

As part of the alliance, the tsar agreed to allow Swedish General Jacob de la Gardie's 10,000 troops to use Novgorod as a base for their operations. The tsar desperately needed the Swedish troops and their Western European mercenaries because they were better trained and disciplined than his mostly second-rate troops.

Bad blood existed between Polish King Sigismund and Swedish King Charles IX, who

Below: The winged hussars' menacing appearance terrified their opponents and spooked their horses



Images © Alamy

was his uncle. Sigismund had once held the thrones of both Poland and Sweden, but his residency in Warsaw coupled with his Roman Catholicism made him unpalatable to the Lutheran Swedes. Charles, who previously was Duke of Sodermanland, successfully overthrew Sigismund in a brief civil war in 1597-98. To avoid appearing as a blatant usurper, Charles ruled the country as regent for six years before finally taking the crown in 1604.

Polish objectives

Sigismund hoped to retake the fortress of Smolensk, the gateway city to eastern Lithuania, as well as the surrounding region known as Severia (composed of modern-day northern Ukraine and eastern Belarus). Muscovy had taken Smolensk from Lithuania in 1514.

Sigismund thought that Smolensk would fall easily to his army, but he was wrong. He had been told by senior advisors that Mikhail Shein, the Muscovite garrison commander at Smolensk, was willing to hand over the fortress to the Poles. This was flawed intelligence, and Shein had no intention of doing any such thing.

Making matters worse, Gudonov had poured money into Smolensk to improve its defences. The Polish besiegers found they had to capture a well-defended fortress that boasted a 6.5km circuit of 11m high walls dotted with 38 watchtowers.

Sigismund arrived in September 1609 with 22,000 troops, most of whom were cavalrymen. Because he did not expect a siege, he didn't bring heavy cannon with which to batter the fortress into submission. His attempts to storm it the following month were unsuccessful, leaving him little choice but to starve it into submission.

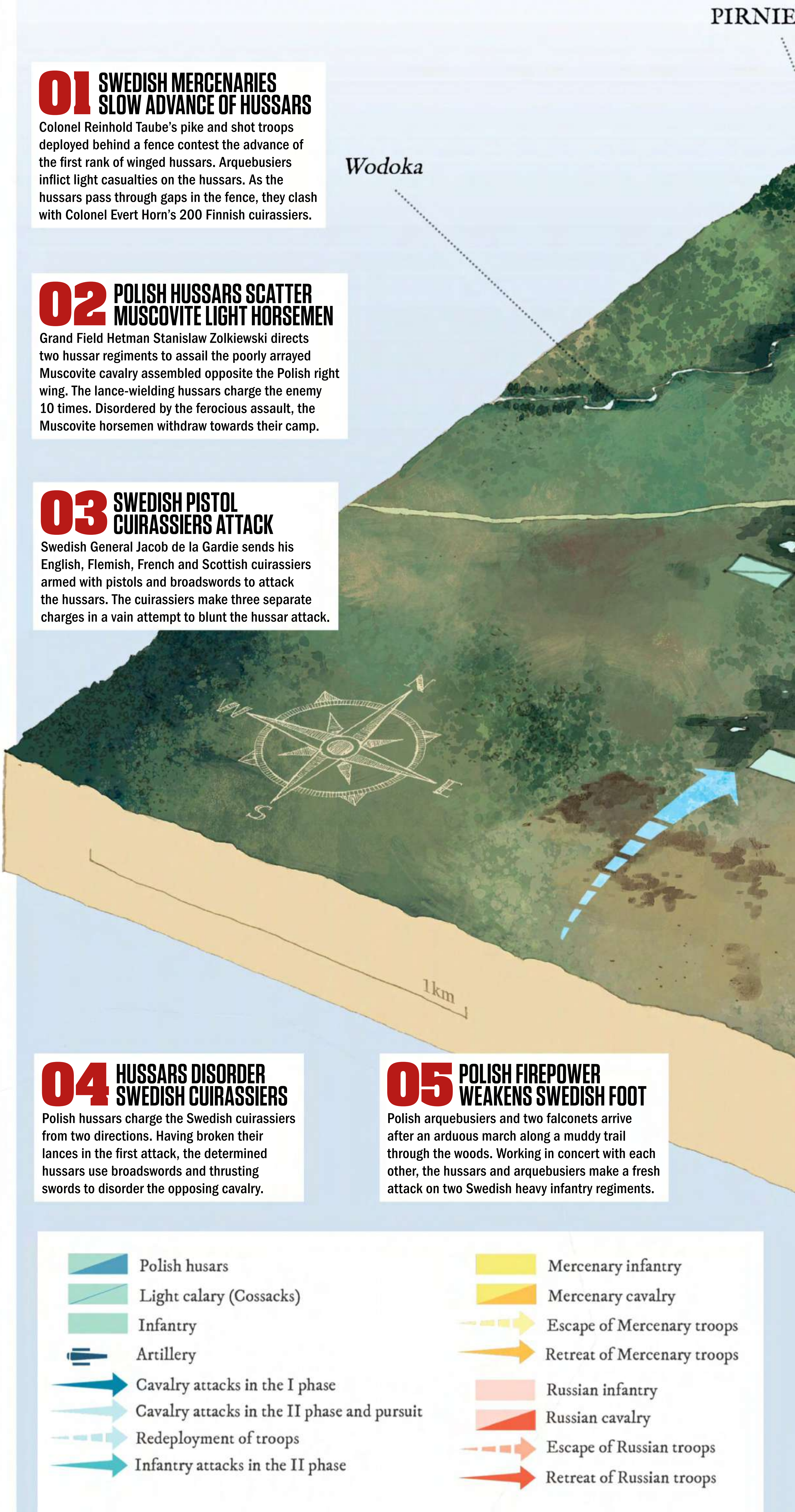
Different tactics

Although the Poles might have struggled when it came to sieges, they had enjoyed great success in open-field battles against the Swedes during the Polish-Swedish War of 1600 to 1611. That conflict was a struggle for control of Livonia, which had belonged to the Teutonic Order in the Middle Ages. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth had absorbed the remnants of the Teutonic Order in Prussia and Livonia into secular duchies in the 16th century. Sweden coveted Livonia because of its great ports and brisk trade with the Hanseatic League.

The most noteworthy of the many Commonwealth victories over the Swedes had come at Kircholm near the Latvian port of Riga in 1605. Lithuanian Grand Hetman Jan Karol Chodkiewicz had used the shock power of his hussars to smash a Swedish army led by Charles IX that outnumbered him three to one.

The winged hussars formed the backbone of the Polish army. Polish King Stephen Bathory, who had preceded Sigismund, had greatly increased the number of hussar units. Hussars were cavalrymen who wore armour to protect their heads and upper bodies and went into battle with long lances that outranged the infantry pikes of the period.

When their lances shattered, the hussars could quickly catch their sabres, which were secured to their right hands with a wrist knot. In addition, they also carried on their horses a palash (broadsword) and a koncerz (long



01 SWEDISH MERCENARIES SLOW ADVANCE OF HUSSARS

Colonel Reinhold Taube's pike and shot troops deployed behind a fence contest the advance of the first rank of winged hussars. Arquebusiers inflict light casualties on the hussars. As the hussars pass through gaps in the fence, they clash with Colonel Evert Horn's 200 Finnish cuirassiers.

02 POLISH HUSSARS SCATTER MUSCOVITE LIGHT HORSEMEN

Grand Field Hetman Stanislaw Zolkiewski directs two hussar regiments to assail the poorly arrayed Muscovite cavalry assembled opposite the Polish right wing. The lance-wielding hussars charge the enemy 10 times. Disordered by the ferocious assault, the Muscovite horsemen withdraw towards their camp.

03 SWEDISH PISTOL CUIRASSIERS ATTACK

Swedish General Jacob de la Gardie sends his English, Flemish, French and Scottish cuirassiers armed with pistols and broadswords to attack the hussars. The cuirassiers make three separate charges in a vain attempt to blunt the hussar attack.

04 HUSSARS DISORDER SWEDISH CUIRASSIERS

Polish hussars charge the Swedish cuirassiers from two directions. Having broken their lances in the first attack, the determined hussars use broadswords and thrusting swords to disorder the opposing cavalry.

05 POLISH FIREPOWER WEAKENS SWEDISH FOOT

Polish arquebusiers and two falconets arrive after an arduous march along a muddy trail through the woods. Working in concert with each other, the hussars and arquebusiers make a fresh attack on two Swedish heavy infantry regiments.

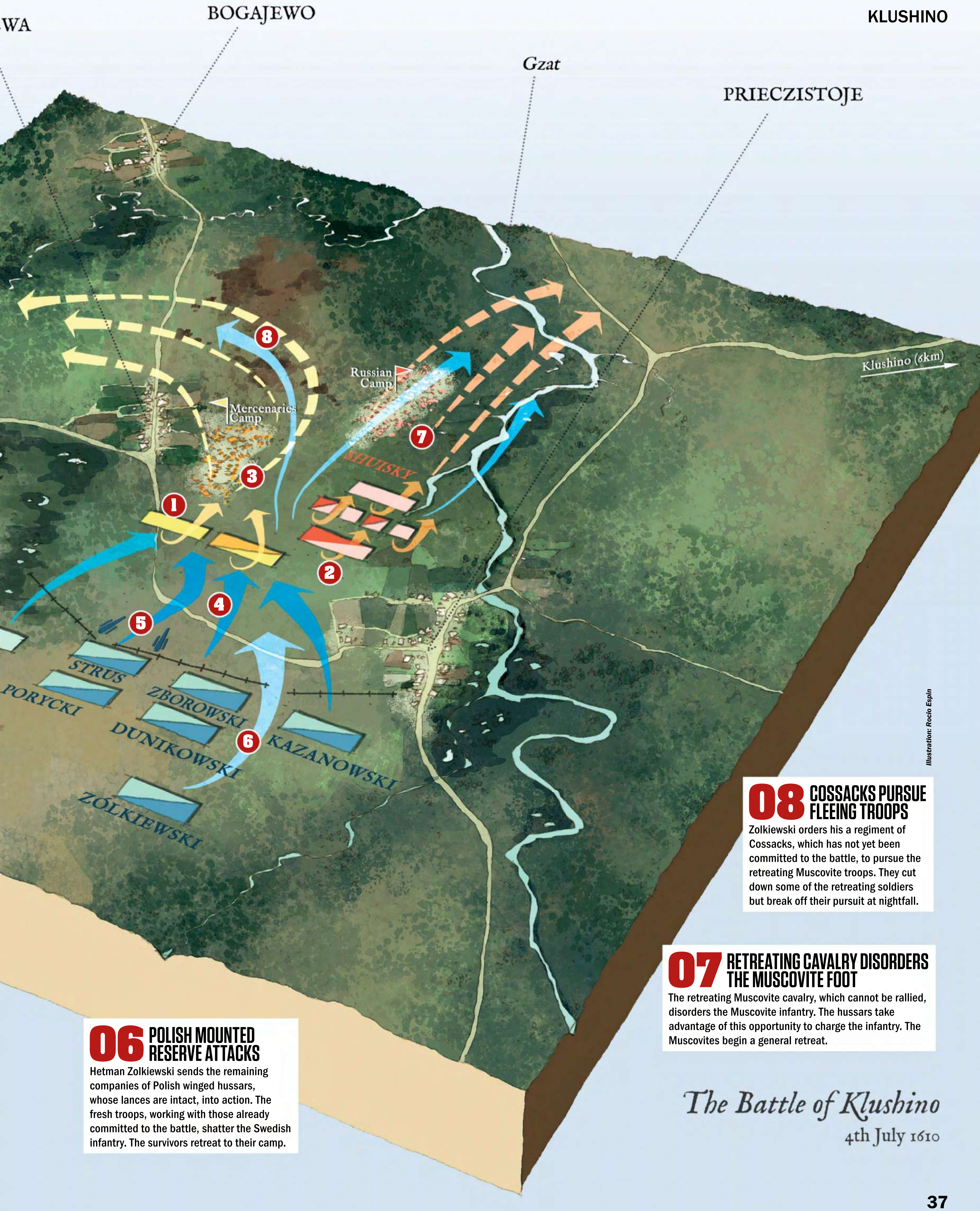

WA
BOGAJEWO
Gzat
PRIECZISTOJE
Klushino (6km)
8
Russian Camp
Mercenaries Camp
7
SHUISKY
3
1
2
4
5
STRUS
PORYCKI
ZBOROWSKI
6
KAZANOWSKI
DUNIKOWSKI
ZÓLKIEWSKI

Illustration: Rocio Espin

The Battle of Klushino

4th July 1610

06 POLISH MOUNTED RESERVE ATTACKS

Hetman Zolkiewski sends the remaining companies of Polish winged hussars, whose lances are intact, into action. The fresh troops, working with those already committed to the battle, shatter the Swedish infantry. The survivors retreat to their camp.

07 RETREATING CAVALRY DISORDERS THE MUSCOVITE FOOT

The retreating Muscovite cavalry, which cannot be rallied, disorders the Muscovite infantry. The hussars take advantage of this opportunity to charge the infantry. The Muscovites begin a general retreat.

08 COSSACKS PURSUE FLEEING TROOPS

Zolkiewski orders his a regiment of Cossacks, which has not yet been committed to the battle, to pursue the retreating Muscovite troops. They cut down some of the retreating soldiers but break off their pursuit at nightfall.

thrusting sword). A hussar whose lance broke often used his koncerz as a backup lance by bracing its hilt against the pommel of their saddle. Affixed to the rear of their saddle was a painted strip of wood adorned with exotic bird feathers. This was the 'wings' of the hussar that made them look both magnificent and menacing.

Unlike the Polish army, whose strength was its hussar cavalry, the strength of the Swedish army at the time was its heavy infantry. Charles IX, like other Protestant rulers, strove to have his army adopt Count Maurice of Nassau's cutting-edge tactics designed for heavy infantry.

Nassau's battle tactics called for a linear deployment, as opposed to the traditional infantry square, which would enable arquebusiers to fire volleys that would produce a broader field of fire. King Charles had sent De La Gardie to Holland to train under Nassau. As for the Swedish cavalry, it fought in the German Reiter-style using the caracole method. This called for each rank of horsemen in a formation to approach the enemy, fire their pistols, and ride to the rear to reload. Its purpose was to maintain a somewhat steady volley fire.

The inferior Muscovite army lagged behind the Swedes and the Poles, despite reforms introduced by Ivan IV in the mid-16th century. Ivan's most enduring achievement was the creation of the Streltsy musketeer units. But while the Streltsy performed well garrisoning strongholds where they were protected from cavalry, they did not perform well in open field battle unless in static entrenched positions or a wagon fort. The Muscovite light cavalry fought largely in the style of Cossacks and Tatar, each horseman armed with a short spear, bow, and sabre.

Allied forces unite

The Swedish troops, initially numbering 10,000, had arrived in Novgorod in early 1609. Shortly afterwards, they joined forces with a Muscovite army commanded by Mikhail Skopin-Shuisky, the tsar's nephew. By late spring 1610 the allied army had not only cleared northern Muscovy of rebel forces, but also driven the rebels out of Tushino. Prospects of success for False Dimitri II were fading fast, and he fled south in a desperate attempt to raise a new army among the Don Cossacks. Most of the Polish troops and Ukrainian Cossacks marched west. Some of these forces joined Zolkiewski's army, while others either joined Sigismund's forces at Smolensk or returned home.

Word reached Sigismund in June that a Muscovite army was marching to relieve Smolensk. He instructed Zolkiewski to take 3,000 troops, among which were two regiments of hussars, and march east to intercept and defeat the relief army. When the hetman reached Tsaryovo-Zaymishche midway between Smolensk and Moscow on June 22, he rendezvoused with three other hussar regiments operating in the area, as well as 4,000 Cossacks.

> "HUSSARS USING THEIR KONCERZ AS LANCES SPEARED MANY OF THE SWEDISH CUIRASSIERS, KNOCKING THEIR OPPONENTS DEAD TO THE GROUND AND SENDING OTHERS TO THE REAR CLUTCHING GHASTLY WOUNDS"

Meanwhile, a new Muscovite army commanded by Dimitri Shuisky, the tsar's brother, had assembled at Mozhaisk, 70 miles west of Moscow, for the purpose of relieving Smolensk. This army consisted of 21,000 Muscovite troops. De La Gardie, who had split off from Mikhail Skopin-Shuisky's army, was marching to join forces with the tsar's brother.

In preparation for a general advance towards Smolensk, Shuisky ordered his 5,000-strong advance guard to threaten the Poles at Tsaryovo-Zaymishche. When they came within 6km of the Polish-Lithuanian army, though, its conservative commander began entrenching.

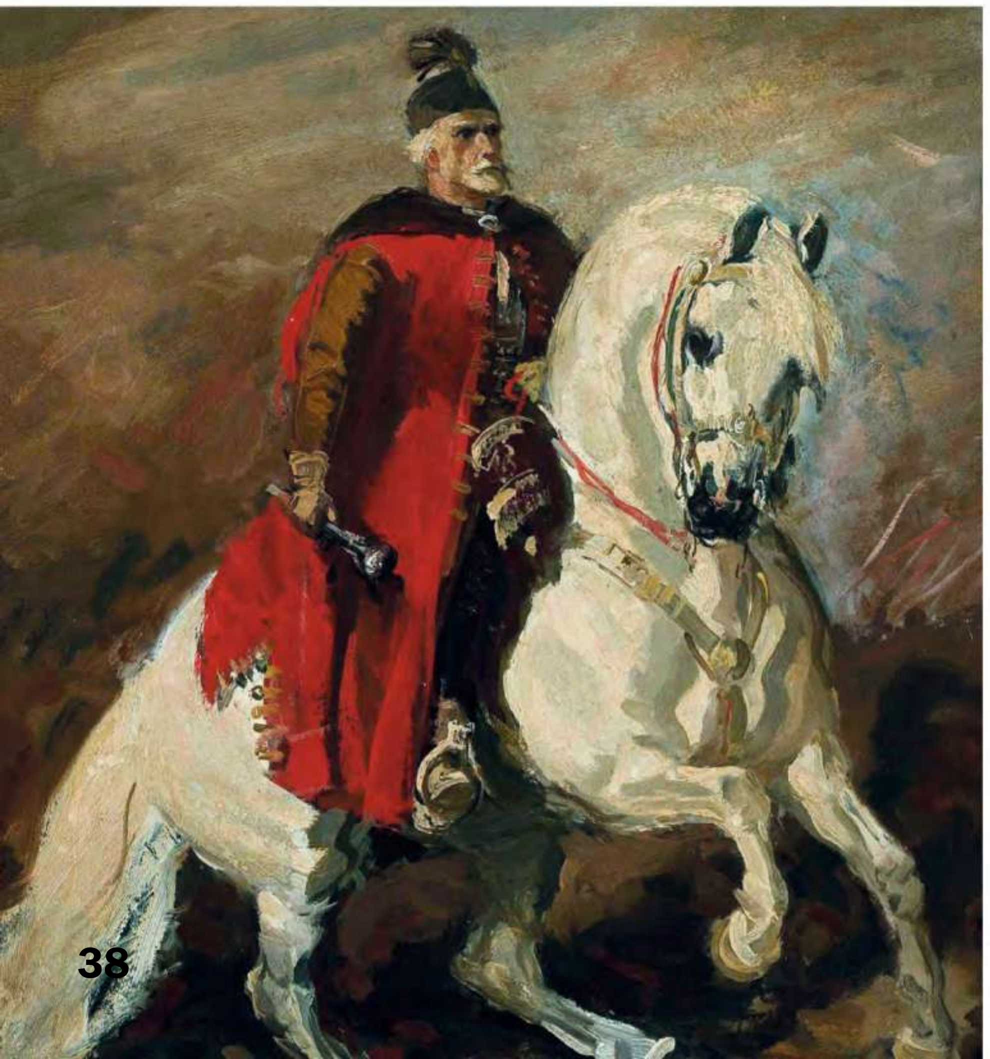
The close proximity of the two armies prompted Zolkiewski to take steps to neutralise the enemy's vanguard. He sent the Cossacks to encircle the Muscovite advanced guard's camp and block any communications with outside forces. Not long afterwards, Zolkiewski received word from defectors from the Swedish army that Jacob De La Gardie's army, which at that point was down to 5,000 troops after a year of hard fighting, was marching to rendezvous with Shuisky's main army. A short time later defectors from the ranks of the Swedish army arrived at the Polish camp. These foreign mercenaries, who were angry at not having been paid, informed the hetman of the movements of the Swedish and Muscovite forces.

Shuisky's main force and De La Gardie's expeditionary force rendezvoused north of Tsaryovo-Zaymishche near the village of Klushino. They advanced a few miles beyond Klushino and bivouacked on 3 July in separate but adjacent camps on the west bank of the Gzhat River. Shuisky failed to send scouting parties to locate the Polish-Lithuanian forces in the vicinity, and also didn't establish picket posts around his encampment to provide early warning of an impending attack.

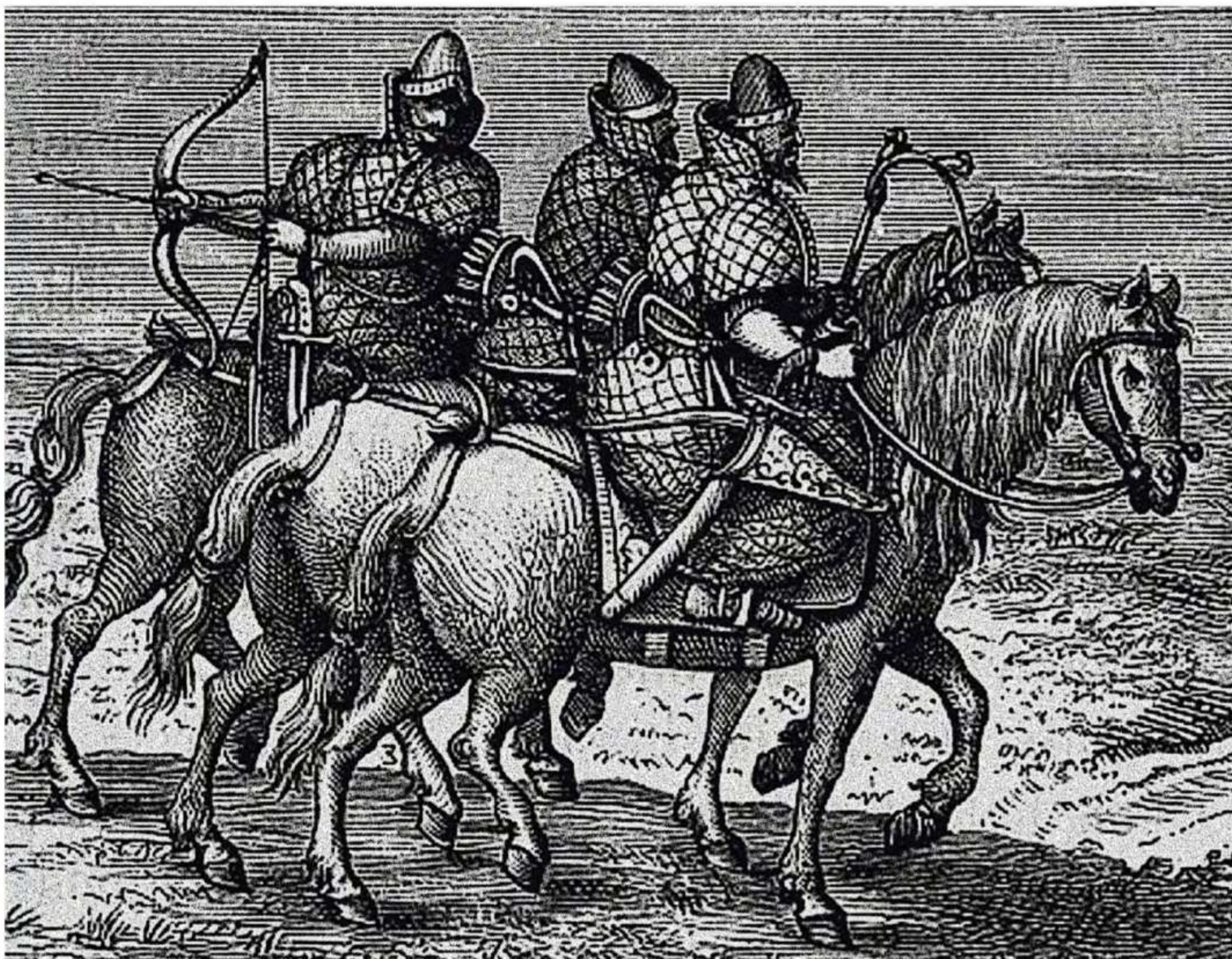
Dawn attack

Leaving 4,000 Cossacks and 700 hussars to contain the Muscovite advance guard, Zolkiewski issued orders for his troops to prepare for a night march on 3 July. They set out two hours before sunset that day with the intent of attacking the larger Swedish-Muscovite army at dawn.

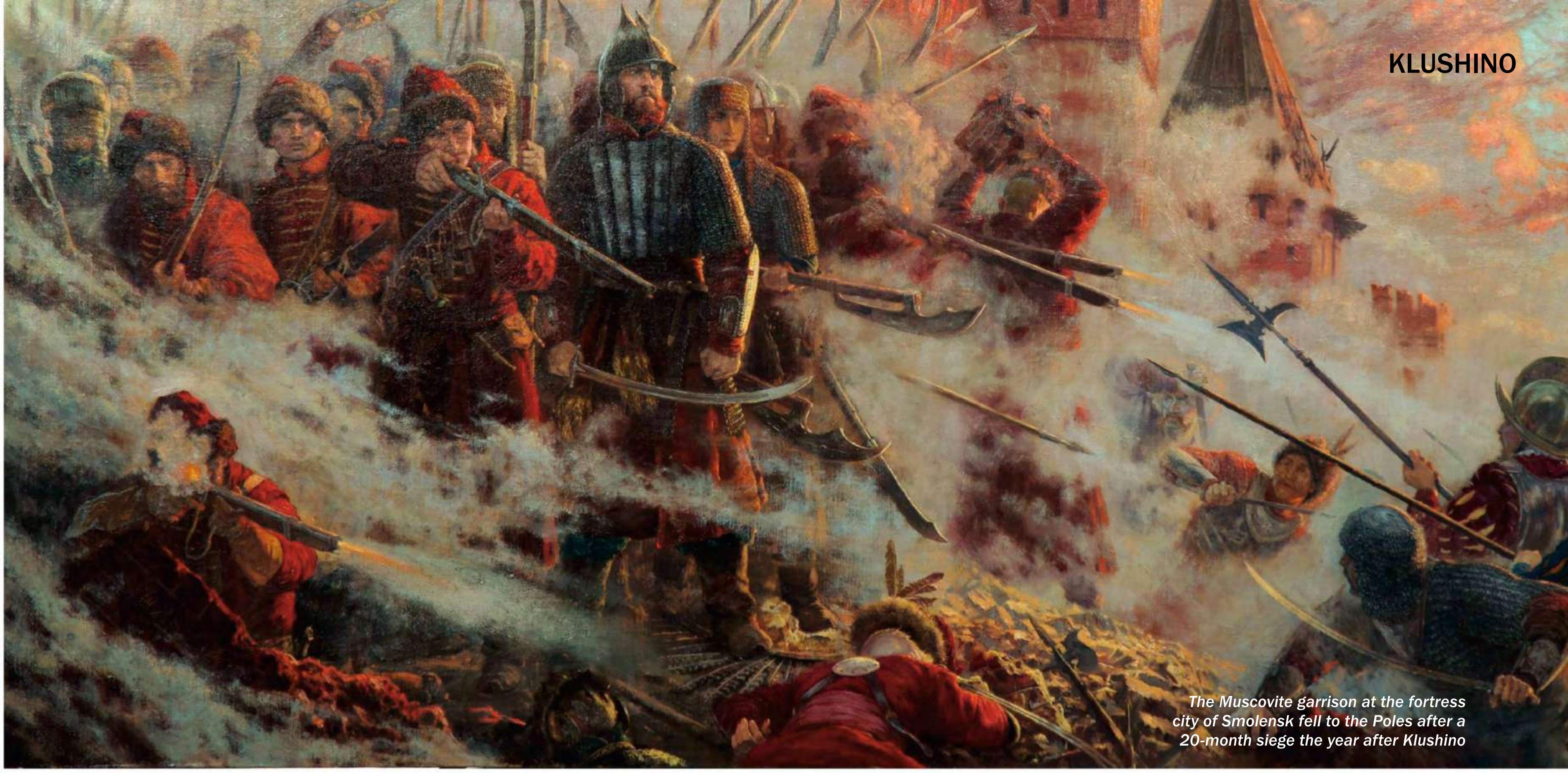
If all went well, they would catch the enemy troops asleep in their tents and overrun their camps. Using local guides to speed their march, the Polish-Lithuanian column, all of which was mounted save for 200 arquebusiers and two falconets, rode 18km through the dark



Below: *Polish Grand Field Hetman Stanislaw Zolkiewski had extensive experience leading hussars*



Below: *Muscovite horsemen fought in the style of Tatars with short spears, sabres and bows*



The Muscovite garrison at the fortress city of Smolensk fell to the Poles after a 20-month siege the year after Klushino

Images © Alamy

of night to reach its objective. The two heavy falconets became mired in the mud on the march, and the teams transporting them fell far behind the main body of hussars.

The Polish army's deployment for the attack was much slower than was necessary to fully exploit the element of surprise, owing to the fence that initially impeded their advance. Zolkiewski arrayed his five hussar regiments with three regiments in the first rank and two in the second rank. He retained a few companies of hussars and a regiment of Cossacks as a reserve.

"The panic-stricken enemy began to stream out of their encampments in disorder," wrote Samuel Maskiewicz, a hussar who fought at Klushino. "The [foreign mercenaries] were first to form up standing in their usual fieldworks, on boggy ground by the palisade. They did us some damage, by the numbers of their infantry armed with pikes and muskets."

Swedish cavalry attacks

The right regiment of winged hussars steadily wore down the less-disciplined Muscovite cavalry. Hussar tactics called for companies within a regiment to charge in successive waves. After as many as ten charges, the Muscovite horsemen began to withdraw.

When the Muscovite cavalry withdrew, De La Gardie committed all of his mercenary cuirassiers to the fight. The battle grew in size and intensity as more Swedish units joined the battle. The hussars desperately needed the firepower of their 200 arquebusiers and the two falconets that had not yet arrived to offset the fire of the Swedish arquebusiers.

The hussars on the left wing timed their charges against the Swedish pistol-firing cuirassiers so that they advanced against them between volleys. As the fighting wore on, the hussars in the front rank of the army fought with their edged weapons having broken their lances.

The hussars began to charge the Swedish cuirassiers from two directions in an effort to disrupt them. Hussars using their koncerz as lances speared many of the Swedish cuirassiers, knocking their opponents dead to the ground and sending others to the rear clutching ghastly wounds.

As the fighting wore on, the hussar charges began to weaken in force due to the loss of lances and battle fatigue. "Our arms and armour were damaged and our strength ebbing from such frequent regrouping and charges against the enemy," wrote Maskiewicz. "Our horses were almost fainting on the battlefield."

A deadly combination

Just as the Polish hussars were reaching a state of extreme fatigue, the Polish arquebusiers and falconet crews emerged from the woods. Zolkiewski ordered the artillerymen to blast apart the remaining sections of the fence line. He also directed the two companies of Polish arquebusiers get astride the right flank of the Swedish infantry and rake it.

As the Polish arquebusiers began to inflict casualties on the Swedish right regiment, Zolkiewski committed his reserve force of hussars. Advancing at a fast trot with levelled lances, they were supported by the hussars already engaged. The weight of the fresh attack broke the Swedish infantry and the survivors fell back to their camp.

With the Swedish foot and horse having withdrawn from the field of battle, the hussars regrouped and charged the front rank of Muscovite foot arrayed in front of their camp adjacent to the river. "We crashed into the whole Muscovite force, still drawn up in battle order at the entrance to their camp, plunging them into disorder," wrote Maskiewicz.

By that time, Shuisky and De La Gardie had exited the field in an effort to stem the panicked flight of some of the troops. Both commanders eventually returned, but by that time the surviving Swedish mercenary infantry had defected to the Polish side of the field. In the days leading up to the battle, Zolkiewski had sent word to the mercenaries that he would welcome them with open arms into his ranks.

Shuisky ordered his troops to abandon their equipment and retreat east to Moscow. As for De La Gardie, he led the native Swedish troops in a long march north to Novgorod. Making matters worse for Shuisky, the advanced guard encamped to the south surrendered to Zolkiewski.

The Polish suffered 300 killed and wounded at Klushino. For the Muscovite army, the butcher's bill came to 2,000 killed and wounded. As for the Swedes, they suffered 1,200 losses.

When Zolkiewski returned to the main army at Smolensk, he and his officers presented Sigismund with Shuisky's banner and his bulawa, an ornate ceremonial baton that was a symbol of his high rank.

Blame for the defeat

The unexpected arrival of the Polish army gave Shuisky little time to deploy his large, ungainly Muscovite army, and he therefore had directed De La Gardie to bear the brunt of the fight that day. Shuisky deserves a great deal of blame for failing to dispatch scouting parties or establish picket posts that might have uncovered the enemy's approach towards his encampment. As for De La Gardie and his mercenaries, they performed with great skill given the difficult predicament in which they found themselves.

Although his army was outnumbered nearly six to one, Zolkiewski achieved a spectacular victory. He not only successfully led his troops on a difficult night march, but successfully directed their shock attack despite the fence that obstructed their initial advance.

Klushino was another resoundingly successful chapter in the ongoing sequence of Polish-Lithuanian hussar victories over the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's two principal foes, the Swedes and the Muscovites. Although Sigismund captured Smolensk in 1611, the Muscovites ultimately retook it in 1654 in a subsequent war between the two great powers.

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WORDS: **TOM GARNER**

REMEMBERING THE GLORIOUS GLOSTERS

Korean War veteran Roy Mills recalls fighting with the battalion that made an heroic last stand at the Battle of the Imjin River, 70 years ago

Imjin River was the most famous action undertaken by the British Army during the Korean War. Fought during 22-25 April 1951, the battle was a colossal struggle by outnumbered United Nations forces to prevent a huge Chinese army from capturing Seoul. The survival of South Korea was at stake and the UN doggedly defended their positions, including the men of 1st Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment. Subsequently known as 'The Glorious Glosters', these British infantrymen held back relentless Chinese assaults for days before they effectively sacrificed themselves to allow other UN units to escape and regroup.

In what was Britain's bloodiest battle since WWII, the majority of the Glosters were captured but received many awards for bravery. This included two Victoria Crosses and a US Presidential Unit Citation – the highest American award for collective gallantry. Remarkably, many of the Glosters were not professional soldiers but conscripted National Servicemen. This included a 19-year-old rifleman from Gloucestershire called Private Roy Mills. Now one of the few surviving Glosters, he describes hand-to-hand combat, an appalling captivity and the enduring fellowship of his comrades.

Conscripted Foresters

Mills was born in 1931 in the Forest of Dean area of Gloucestershire, England. A distinctive region famed for its woods and mining industries, the inhabitants are locally known as 'Foresters'. Mills had been a carpenter before he was conscripted for National Service aged 18 but he didn't mind joining the Gloucestershire Regiment.

Image: Roy Mills

> "THESE BRITISH INFANTRYMEN HELD BACK RELENTLESS CHINESE ASSAULTS FOR DAYS BEFORE THEY EFFECTIVELY SACRIFICED THEMSELVES TO ALLOW OTHER U.N. UNITS TO ESCAPE"

"I looked forward to it because everyone else was going, including all the boys I went to school with," he says. "I went to Gloucester Station to travel for training and met two blokes there. I went to school with one of them and the other was a Forester from Ruardean. We became best mates from that time: we were prisoners together and I helped them through the bad times. We were an already close unit when we joined up. There were a lot of Foresters in the Glosters, including our sergeant."

After a spell of "pretty hard" training, Mills spent time serving with the Dorset Regiment in Austria, where he became a company boxer. Nicknamed 'Freddie' after Freddie Mills – a British world boxing champion – Mills became confident in self-defence. "I could look after myself and if anybody tried anything with me it wasn't a good idea!" he recalls.

Although he didn't know it, Mills' boxing skills would be invaluable for his next deployment, which was Korea. After returning to England, he rejoined the Glosters and signed up for active service. "They wanted some volunteers to go back to the Glosters and of course all of us Foresters volunteered. I only volunteered for Korea because the rest of us did! Luckily none of the Foresters were killed, even though they were in most of the fighting," he says.

"Poor and primitive"

On 1 October 1950, Mills and almost 900 officers and men of 1st Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment sailed from Southampton as part of the British 29th Independent Infantry Brigade. After a voyage of over a month that took them via the Suez Canal and Japan, the Glosters landed at Pusan in South Korea on 3 November. Despite volunteering and undertaking a journey halfway across the world, Mills knew little about the war: "I knew nothing about Korea and when we got to Japan they gave us a session about what the war was about. To tell

Main pic: *Lieutenant Colonel James Carne's VC citation described how his "courage, coolness and leadership was felt not only in his battalion, but throughout the whole brigade"*

Inset, left: *Roy Mills (back row, second from left) pictured with members of 2nd Platoon, A Company, 1st Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment in Korea shortly before the Battle of Imjin River*

© Alamy

you the truth, it was like playing 'Cowboys and Indians' when we arrived – until a bullet went through my cap comforter!"

The war had already wreaked devastation on Korea but Mills was almost familiar with the harsh conditions. "Korea was very poor and primitive but I wasn't that shocked when I arrived," he says. "The Forest of Dean was a coal mining area and most people's dads worked down the pits. As soon as you came of age you had to register to either go down the pits or into the army. My dad said to me, 'Don't you go down the pits.' I didn't know until I came home from Korea that my uncle was killed in a mining accident and left ten kids. My other uncle was also injured so going in the army was [in some ways] a safer option."

29th Brigade was part of the multinational American-led United Nations force that had been fighting the North Koreans. The UN had advanced far north to the Yalu River, which was close to the Chinese border, but this prompted China to enter the war on the North Korean side. 29th Brigade arrived at the front in early December 1950 and participated in the UN withdrawal when the Chinese crossed the Imjin River and captured Seoul.

The UN launched a counteroffensive in February 1951 and Seoul was recaptured in March. This was the fourth time in a year that the city had been captured and the mayhem had produced a devastating refugee crisis. Mills recalls being unable to help fleeing civilians: "It was pretty rough and there were plenty of refugees, although we just had to pass them. This was because Chinese soldiers were hiding among them so you had to keep away."

A buffer zone was created just north of the South Korean capital along the 38th Parallel after the UN recaptured Seoul. 29th Brigade placed its battalions on hilltop positions overlooking the south bank of the regained Imjin River from 1 April 1951 but their long front line was problematic. The 4,000-strong brigade was thinly spread out and their positions were only meant to be temporary. This meant that no communication wires or mines were laid, although the steep hills overlooking the Imjin were ideal for defence.

Centurion tanks of the 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars lie disabled after they tried to break through the Chinese advance to relieve the Glosters

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"ON THE GROUND, THE GLOSTERS OF A COMPANY WERE UNAWARE THAT THE CHINESE HAD BEEN METICULOUSLY PREPARING FOR THE COMING BATTLE"

"They just kept coming"

Commanded by Lieutenant Colonel James Carne, the Glosters' companies were spread out on different hill points. Mills was in 2nd Platoon, A Company, which was placed at a forward position called 'Castle Hill'. This overlooked a part of the river nicknamed 'Gloster Crossing'. The battalion's nearest support were two battalions from the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers and Royal Ulster Rifles but they were 3km away. The Glosters were additionally positioned on the far left flank of 29th Brigade's lines with a Belgian battalion on the north side of the Imjin.

A British machine gun team pictured in action during the Korean War

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PENG & YANG

The Chinese commanders at the Imjin River were highly experienced soldiers who had risen from obscurity through the ranks of the People's Liberation Army

Peng Dehuai (1898-1974) and Yang Dezhi (1911-94) both joined the Chinese Communist Party in 1928. Both were from poor backgrounds but rose through Mao Zedong's communist ranks to participate in the Long March, Chinese Civil War and Sino-Japanese War. When the People's Republic of China was established in 1949, Yang was already a subordinate of Peng and both were high-ranking officers in the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

When China entered the Korean War, Peng was appointed the commander of the PLA while Yang led 19th Army Group. Peng planned the Chinese Spring Offensive of 1951, with Yang being designated to lead 63rd Corps in the attack against the UN along the Imjin River. The heavy casualties during the battle and elsewhere persuaded Peng that the PLA had to become better equipped and organised if it was to properly adapt to modern warfare.

The PLA suffered perhaps one million casualties under Peng's leadership before he signed the armistice that ended the Korean War. He became China's Minister of Defence while Yang succeeded him as commander of the PLA during 1954-55. Peng's Korean experiences led to him trying to reform the PLA on the Soviet model during his time in government. He eventually began to criticise Mao's leadership, which resulted in him being sentenced to life imprisonment in 1970.

献给
中国人民解放军第十九兵团
穆民之友
银川市全体回民敬献

***Left:** Peng Dehuai's reputation was rehabilitated after his death and the Chinese Communist Party now regards him as one of their most successful generals*

Yang Dezhi served Peng for many years as his deputy and had a reputation for unquestioning obedience in carrying out orders

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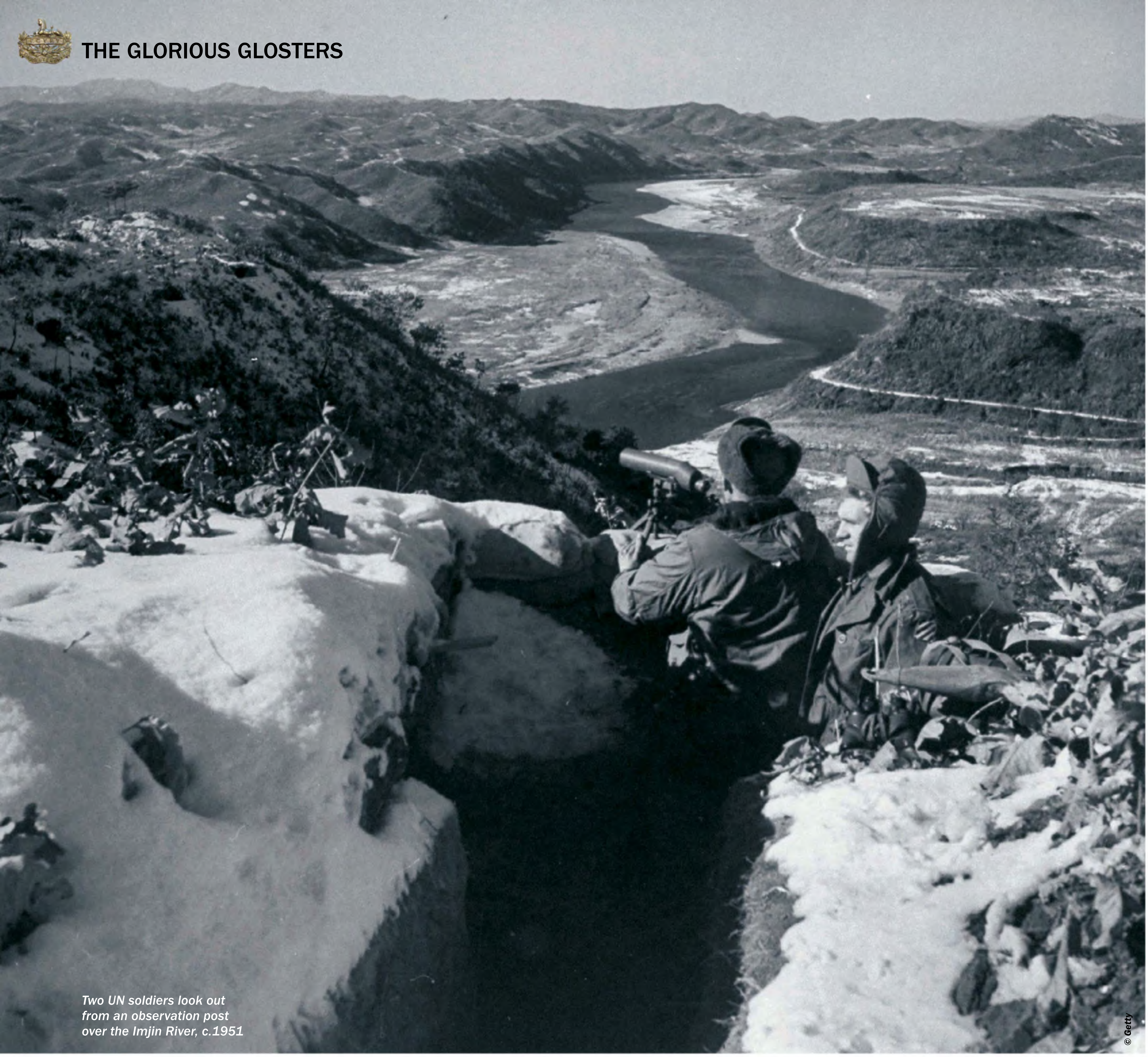

Two UN soldiers look out from an observation post over the Imjin River, c.1951

© Getty

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American and South Korean troops were even further away on the brigade's right flank.

The widely dispersed UN force was about to be confronted by the colossal Chinese 'Spring Offensive' on 22 April. This huge attack involved some 300,000 Chinese troops advancing along a 64km front in an attempt to regain control of the Imjin and retake Seoul. For 29th Brigade, this meant the terrifying prospect of defending their positions against approximately 27,000 men of the Chinese 63rd Corps.

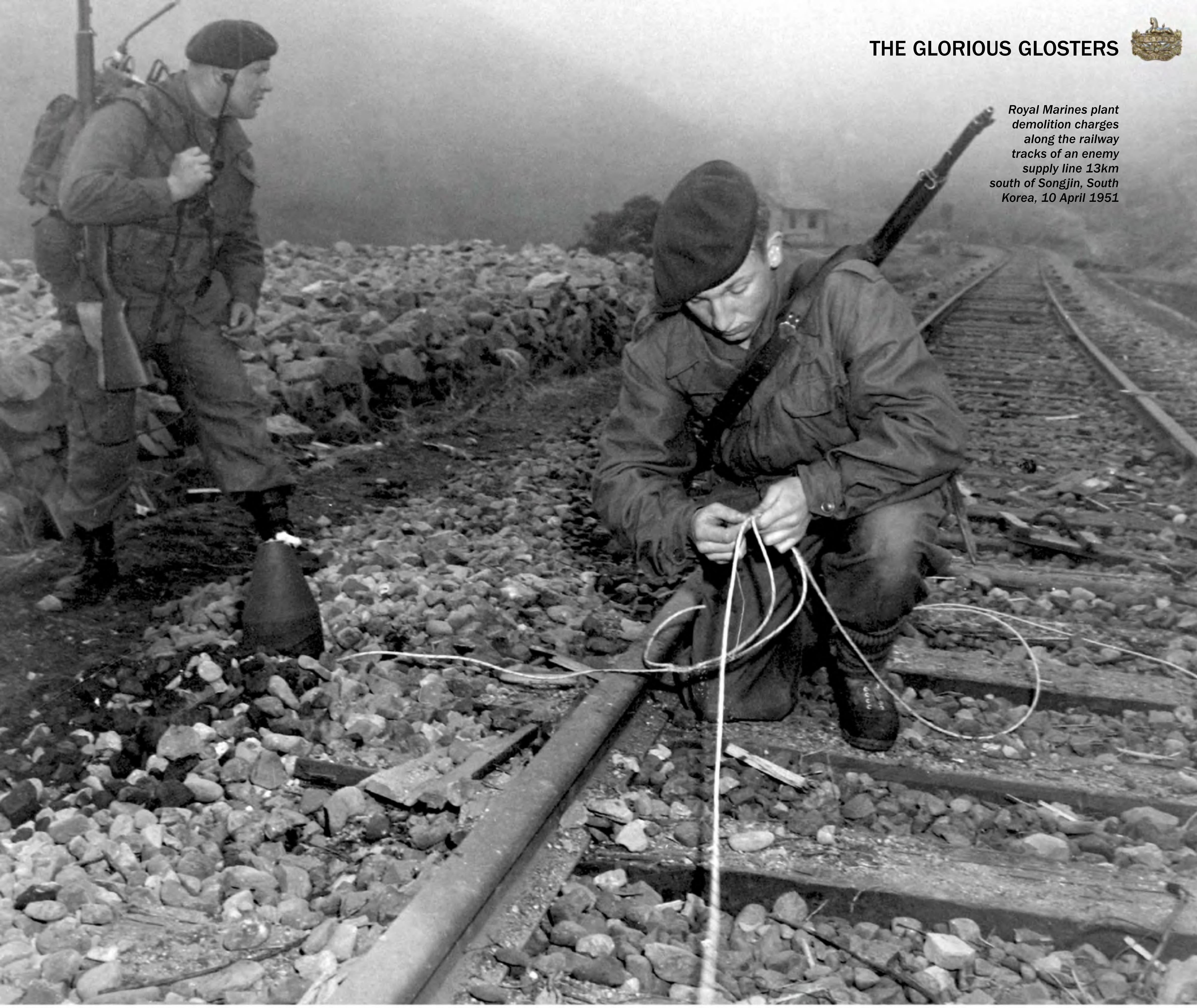
On the ground, the Glosters of A Company were unaware that the Chinese had been meticulously preparing for the coming battle. "It was just open country with paddy fields," says Mills. "We took over an American OP and were on Castle Hill with a bunker at the end of it. We went across the river on a patrol and never saw any Chinese apart from perhaps one or two. We came back and everything was alright for a while but we didn't realise that the Chinese had built bridges under the water. We were overlooking the river but never saw them do it. They had even reinforced them and so when they crossed they were able to do it en masse. It looked like they were fording the river and that's how they came across so quick when they started the offensive."

An additional problem for A Company was that the Chinese took advantage of the abandoned bunker on Castle Hill. "We were in the forward position when we were hit. The Americans had bailed out and left the bunker open, which then let the Chinese in. They opened fire on us and that's when the battle really started. We did make a few attacks but we were outnumbered. All of the Chinese were suddenly charging and they didn't seem to worry about life, they just kept coming."

> "MILLS WAS CAUGHT IN THE THICK OF BATTLE, WITH SURVIVAL BEING THE PARAMOUNT THOUGHT"

Dug into trenches, A Company was now the vanguard in the Glosters' efforts to defend their positions when the Battle of the Imjin River began on 22 April 1951. Despite being well armed, Mills recalls how his company came under extremely heavy attack: "There was a battalion of us but against us were [thouands of] Chinese soldiers… They soon formed up, made the attack and didn't mind how many men they lost so long as they took their objective. They never had things like the automatic weapons we had, but they kept coming. Meanwhile, we had Bren guns. I was a 'Number Two' on the Bren while my mate was 'Number One'. We kept firing and firing while the Chinese just kept falling. They would swamp you but they lost a few men when they attacked us."

The fighting on Castle Hill was ferocious, with the other nearby Gloster companies also becoming heavily engaged. Mills was caught



Royal Marines plant demolition charges along the railway tracks of an enemy supply line 13km south of Songjin, South Korea, 10 April 1951

in the thick of battle, with survival being the paramount thought. "We were hit first on Castle Hill because we were the forward company. You hadn't got time to feel because we were too busy. You also didn't have time to think – you just kept sticking bullets up the breech and kept firing while the Chinese kept coming."

Elsewhere, other units such as the Northumberland Fusiliers, Ulster Rifles and the Glosters' small team of attached Royal Artillerymen were also under heavy attack. Mills was mostly unaware of their efforts during the battle but has great respect for them. "Those of us in the OPs used to turn around and give information back to the mortars. The Chinese would come down the river but then the mortars would open up and slaughter them. There were also the Ulster Rifles who went across the Imjin for us but they got a heck of a hammering. We didn't know this at the time though. We were just focussing and concentrating on what we were doing, which was basically saving our own skin!"

A "bitter battle"

A Company fought at their original position until the following day on 23 April, which was also Saint George's Day. Mills experienced heavy combat through day and night during unremitting engagements that tested not just the soldiers but also their weapons. "We were thinly spread out because we were only a company and the Vickers guns became hot from firing all the time. They would expand or contract because of the heat, which meant of course that they jammed or seized up. My weapon also became hot and we were firing and firing until we ran out of ammunition."

It was during this time that Mills received a minor wound. "At the back of my trench was a big stone and all of a sudden there was a 'Tang!' A bullet had hit the stone, which then broke off and hit me in the back of the neck. It was a splinter and I looked to see if there was any blood but there was just bruising. It was a bit sore but it was the only wound I got so I was lucky."

With Castle Hill coming under increasing pressure, a counter-attack was attempted to hold back the Chinese. A Company's 24-year-old officer Lieutenant Philip Curtis made a solo charge under covering fire, despite being wounded and his men trying to get him medical attention. He was killed, but not before he had destroyed an enemy position with a grenade. Mills witnessed this event: "He was our platoon commander and was on the hill with us when he got shot. We had no ammunition left and he just made an attack on them. He was a good officer, and in fact all of our officers were pretty good." For his gallantry, Curtis was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross with his citation concluding, "[His] conduct was magnificent throughout this bitter battle."

Despite their best efforts, A Company's position on Castle Hill became untenable. All the Gloster companies were now being forced into a shrinking defensive perimeter on a feature called 'Hill 235' and A Company's task was to regroup there. Partially thanks to Curtis's bravery, A Company was able to leave the hill. "The Chinese were making their own attacks from the Americans' OP on Castle Hill. We never had enough men to take it back so we were defending one side when they made attacks on us. We became surrounded and went down through the valley off Castle Hill."

During this fighting A Company came under the informal command of the Glosters' adjutant Captain Anthony Farrar-Hockley, who was later awarded the Distinguished Service Order. When the time came to withdraw, Mills was given blunt instructions: "As we went down through the valley off Castle Hill I bumped into Farrar-Hockley and asked, 'What am I going to do, sir?' and he said, 'Get out!'"

Along with his friend and fellow National Serviceman David Gardiner, Mills was one of the last two Glosters to leave Castle Hill and fought in desperate hand-to-hand combat to reach Hill 235. "Because our weapons had become so hot you had to find something else to fight with. I shot a Chinese soldier and took his rifle off him because we had no ammunition. We had nothing so we hit them with anything, including boots, and it helped that I used to box a bit."

"It's always worth it"

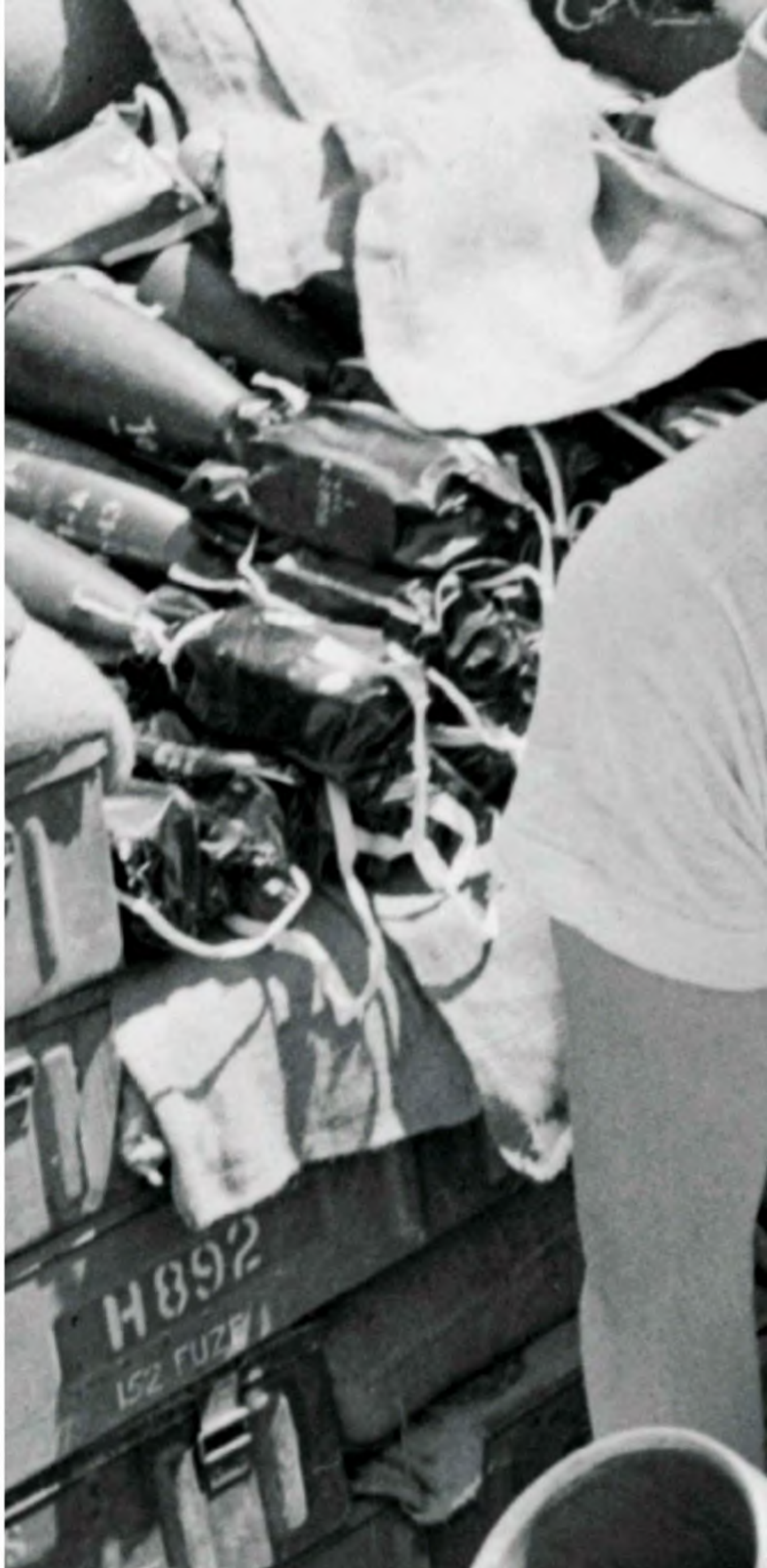
Mills and Gardiner managed to escape to Hill 235, which was an ominous place. Three of its sides were almost vertical, with only the south side being climbable. The entire battalion was on the hill by 24 April and became completely cut off when relief attempts from the rest of 29th Brigade were unable to reach them. Despite being very short of ammunition and water, Colonel Carne and the Glosters were determined to hold their ground.

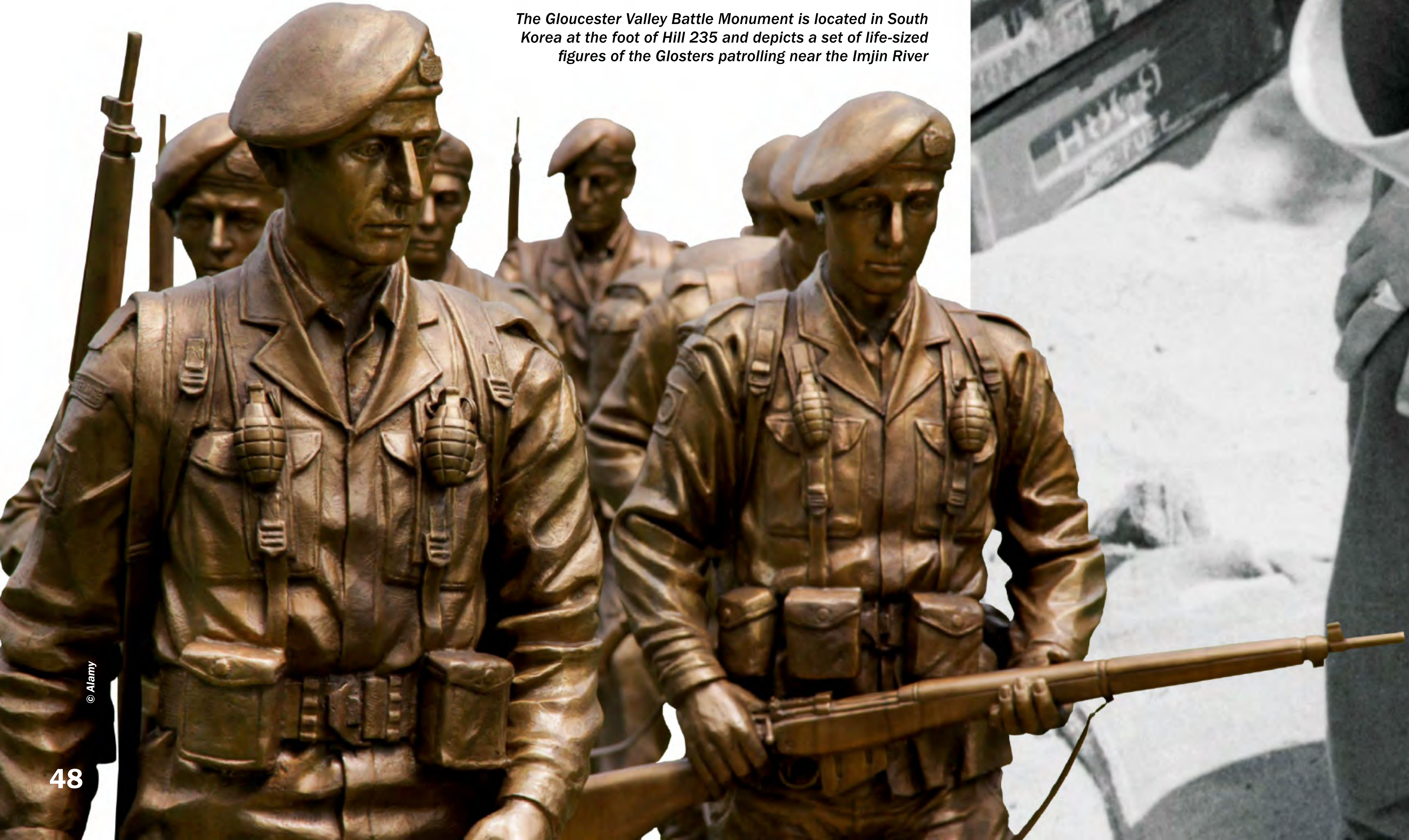
On 25 April, the Chinese launched a huge attack against the Glosters with wave after wave of soldiers. The battalion held firm and there was even a duel of bugle calls between the two sides. To hold back the Chinese, a UN airstrike was launched against an opposing occupied hill using a new weapon: napalm. Mills witnessed the horrendous aftermath: "It was terrible when the Americans came over napalming and the Chinese ran and squealed like caged rats. It was like putting a match to a piece of lawn because the napalm flared up – it was terrible stuff."

"WE HAD NOTHING SO WE HIT THEM WITH ANYTHING, INCLUDING BOOTS, AND IT HELPED THAT I USED TO BOX"

Despite the napalm strike, the Glosters could not hold out forever and Carne was eventually ordered to pull out by Brigadier Thomas Brodie over the radio. The battalion withdrew by splitting into groups, but UN forces were now 4km behind in the rear and only 40 Glosters reached safety. Their casualties were 622 with 59 killed while the rest, including Mills and the wounded, were captured. He recalls the desperate last struggle on Hill 235, which became known as 'Gloster Hill': "When we got onto Gloster Hill it was the final part of the battle. Everybody was around me and there was shelling. We were out of ammunition, food, everything but I passed Farrar-Hockley at one point and asked, 'Is it worth it, sir?' He said, 'It's always worth it.'

"However, once we ran out of ammunition we'd had our chips because the Chinese massed all around us. When we actually got captured, I was with this bloke who said to me, 'Let's take a break' because we were completely surrounded and had nowhere to go.





The Gloucester Valley Battle Monument is located in South Korea at the foot of Hill 235 and depicts a set of life-sized figures of the Glosters patrolling near the Imjin River

© Alamy

THE GLOSTERS' GUNNERS

A handful of Royal Artillerymen were the only other British soldiers to receive a US Presidential Unit Citation for the Battle of the Imjin River

C Troop, 170th Independent Mortar Battery was a small unit of gunners who were attached to the Glosters. Armed with ML 4.2-inch mortars, which were the smallest guns in the Royal Artillery, C Troop's job was to support their infantry comrades. During the Battle of the Imjin River, they had no medium or heavy artillery support and (like the Glosters) were thinly spread out.

Lance Bombardier Tommy Clough spoke to **History of War** in 2016 and described how C Troop kept up a ferocious rate of fire: "We kept firing and firing until the barrels were glowing red-hot, which was very dangerous. The mortar crews held competitions with each other to see how many they could get in the air before the first one exploded."

Like the Glosters' A Company, C Troop were forced onto Hill 235, where saving their guns took on a symbolic importance. "That hill still gives me the creeps but we had to take our mortars with us," recalled Clough. "They were heavy, four-feet long and usually drawn on wheels but our guns were our colours so it was a point of honour to take them."

C Troop eventually spiked their mortars by putting live grenades down the barrels so that they wouldn't be captured by the Chinese. Like Roy Mills, Clough was captured but the two men have remained friends to this day. C Troop, along with the Glosters, was later awarded a US Presidential Unit Citation. Clough summed up why the UN fought in Korea: "I know it sounds like an old cliche but we were defending freedom and that's what we were fighting for."

***Right:** Tommy Clough pictured in South Korea, April 2016*

© Tommy Clough

Royal Artillerymen fire 4.2-inch mortars in support of the Northamptonshire Regiment at Anzio, Italy, during WWII, 18 May 1944

© Getty

However, this bloke did try to escape but they soon caught him and brought him back."

The battle was finally over but the cost had been enormous. Approximately one quarter of 29th Brigade had become casualties, while further along the UN line the South Koreans suffered 8,000 casualties as well as 1,500 Americans. Severe though these numbers were they paled in comparison to the Chinese casualties. 63rd Corps may have incurred casualties of approximately 70,000 men, including 10,000-20,000 against 29th Brigade alone. The true figure will never be fully known but it is estimated that 63rd Corps lost around 40 per cent of its personnel at the Imjin River.

Although they were tactically beaten, the ferocious stand of 29th Brigade – including the Glosters' holding action – enabled UN forces to regroup and the Chinese advance on Seoul was permanently halted. Nevertheless, the significant strategic benefits of the Imjin River were unknown to Mills and the other captured Glosters as they were marched away to a terrible captivity.

Resisting indoctrination

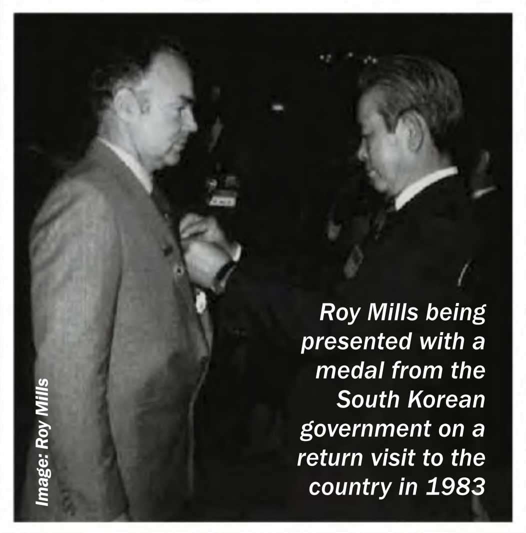
After being captured, the Glosters were force-marched into North Korea. "We marched for weeks going north, south, east and west to get to the camp. The Americans had air superiority so the Chinese used to march us by night. We were exhausted and ate virtually no food except for what you could scrape up."

At one point, the Glosters were crammed into an inadequate shed, where they were plagued by vermin. "We were tightly packed in and there were rats that ran all over. You couldn't hit or get rid of them because our arms were so tightly packed and I can never forget a rat running across my face. I felt his front paws, his back paws and then his tail – it was a terrible sensation."

The Glosters finally reached their prison camp near the North Korean-Chinese border, where they were kept in horrendous conditions. There were also American POWs but the two nationalities were kept separate. "Some of our blokes died but [many more] Americans in our camp [also died]. They were averaging six to eight deaths [per day] at one point and there was an area in the camp called 'Boot Hill' where they buried the dead. We weren't allowed to mix with the Americans because there was a road that separated us."

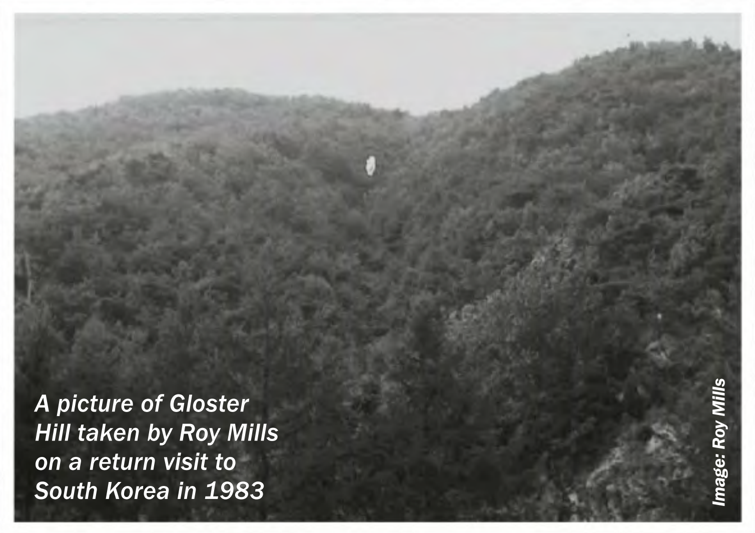
Thirty-four Glosters died, with the death rate being partially due to malnourishment. "Korea was a poor place and so were the conditions because the Chinese didn't have any food themselves. In the beginning they never had any food so we never got any. We lived on what we could find. Gradually, the longer we were there the better the food became."

The prisoners not only had to contend with starvation but also attempts at political indoctrination as their Chinese captors tried to convert them to communism. These attempts to bend the British to their will included placing prisoners in solitary confinement for long



Roy Mills being presented with a medal from the South Korean government on a return visit to the country in 1983

Image: Roy Mills



A picture of Gloster Hill taken by Roy Mills on a return visit to South Korea in 1983

Image: Roy Mills

periods, including Colonel Carne and Captain Farrar-Hockley. Mills himself was put in solitary confinement for a week after trying to help his ill friend David Gardiner. “Dave was in a hell of state but they were taking him up to the ‘Office’. A Chinese guard was pushing him so I pushed him back. I was put in solitary until I ‘confessed’ that I wouldn’t do it again.”

Mills’ spell in solitary confinement affected his mental health. “You’re not with it and you go out of your mind. You couldn’t see anything: there was a door but no windows so you were in the dark all the time. Your memory also played havoc on you and it took me out. The Chinese eventually said, ‘You’ve got to apologise’ so I got out by saying that I wouldn’t do it again.”

The Glosters endured this combination of hunger, indoctrination and solitary confinement for two-and-a-half years. Mills found that the best way to cope in these harsh conditions was to mentally disengage: “I didn’t enjoy being a prisoner and if I could have got out of there I would have. You didn’t think anything a lot of the time and walked around with your mind being a bit of a blank. However, that was actually the best way to be because they used to try to hammer you with communism. The average British soldier wasn’t really interested in politics and we didn’t take to them trying to indoctrinate us. Most of us didn’t take any notice.”

“THE GLOSTERS ENDURED THIS COMBINATION OF HUNGER, INDOCTRINATION AND SOLITARY CONFINEMENT FOR TWO-AND-A-HALF YEARS”

Despite the harsh treatment the Glosters received from the Chinese, Mills recalls that humanity could exist between the captives and captors: “We used to have to go and chop down wood. One tree fell on top of a Chinese soldier and one of our blokes went to lift the tree up so that the man could get out. It was comical because we were enemies and yet he did a thing like that.”

This generosity continued even after the prisoners were released in 1953 after an armistice ended the war. “We were taken to South Korea and on the way the side of a mountain by the road collapsed. A truck behind us went right down into a river and Dave Gardiner was in it so I got out and ran back to see if he was alright. A couple of British blokes had managed to get out as it was rolling down the hill. One of them was a little Scottish cook from the Catering Corps but he got in the cab and rescued the Chinese driver.”

After years of captivity, the POWs were almost numb to the feeling of freedom. “We didn’t show the Chinese that we were pleased to be released. It was obviously a relief but we were a bit down in the dumps by then. We weren’t very strong by the end and had lost a lot of weight.”

Chinese soldiers listen to the terms of the armistice that ends the Korean War, August 1953

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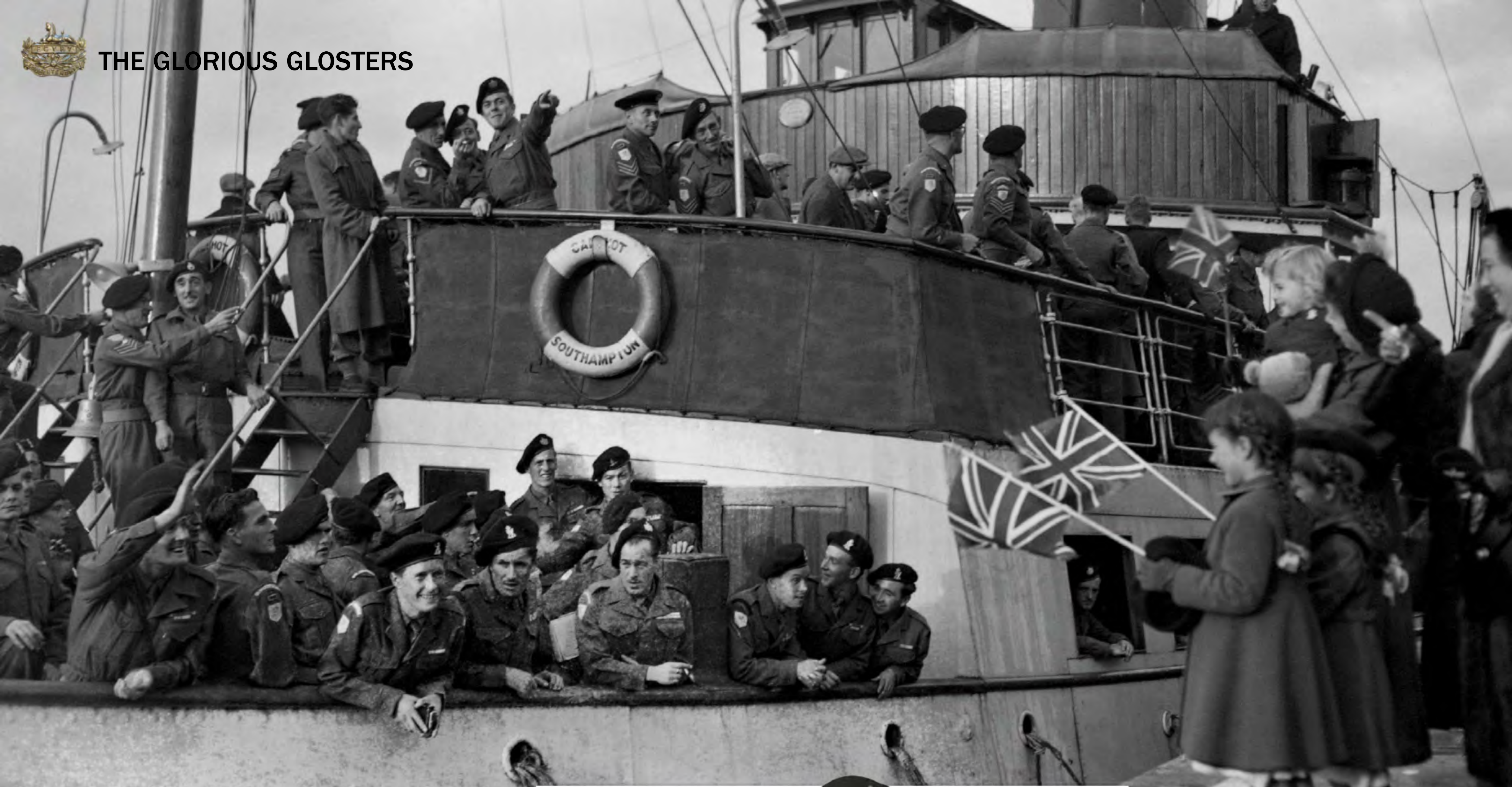


Family members greet the surviving Gloster POWs as they dock in Southampton, October 1953

© Getty

Image: Roy Mills

Roy Mills (centre) pictured at a Gloucestershire Regiment reunion with fellow Imjin River veterans Tommy Clough (left) and Benny Whitchurch (right)

"Superb battlefield courage"

The Glosters were sent to recuperate in Japan before they returned to the UK. In their absence, American President Harry S Truman had awarded the Glosters the US Presidential Unit Citation on 8 May 1951. Part of the citation read: "Without thought of defeat or surrender, this heroic force demonstrated superb battlefield courage and discipline. 1st Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment… displayed such gallantry, determination and esprit de corps in accomplishing their mission… as to set them apart and above other units participating in the same battle."

The battalion's last stand caught the imagination of the press and they were acclaimed as the Glorious Glosters. Mills was proud of what they had achieved but weariness was the main feeling. "We didn't realise [the battle's] importance but by the time we got home it had been glorified and become big headlines. We simply didn't think about it apart from wanting to get home. I was only a young chap of 19 but some of the reservists were married men in their forties and fifties. They didn't like being in Korea but didn't have much choice, while I didn't think we'd done anything out of the ordinary."

Nevertheless, when the Gloster POWs finally returned home they were given a hero's welcome when they docked at Southampton on 14 October 1953. This included Colonel Carne, who finally received the Victoria Cross that had been awarded for his "powers of leadership" on the Imjin River. Mills' own family and community made arrangements to fete the returning Foresters. "My parents hired a bus to pick us up. One of my mates had three brothers and they came on the ship and carried him down the gangplank. When I came home the local people laid on a party and presented me with a watch, which I still wear."

Mills was demobbed shortly after he came home and resumed his carpentry career. In the years since, Korea became known as the 'Forgotten War' in Britain but the South Koreans have always remembered the UN's role in saving their country from communist dictatorship. The courage of 29th Brigade at the Imjin River was a notable part of that endeavour because their actions stabilised the front line. The Chinese and North Koreans came to realise that they could not defeat the UN in battle and after a long stalemate an armistice was signed in July 1953. Korea remains divided and a geopolitical hotspot, but the contrast between the thriving, democratic South Korea of today and the isolated dictatorship of North Korea could not be starker.

Mills himself recognises the importance of what was achieved: "At the time people didn't really realise that there even was a war and people don't understand what Korea was like. The battle definitely did help save South Korea because we really held up the Chinese and hurt them."

As a National Serviceman, Mills had no choice but to serve in the British Army. Nevertheless, his overriding memory of his service was the "esprit de corps" of the Glosters: "When I look back now I don't regret [being in the army]. I didn't like it but it I don't regret it, particularly with some of the friends I made. We Glosters became a tight-knit bunch who I kept in touch with and visited across England. The main thing was that I had good mates."

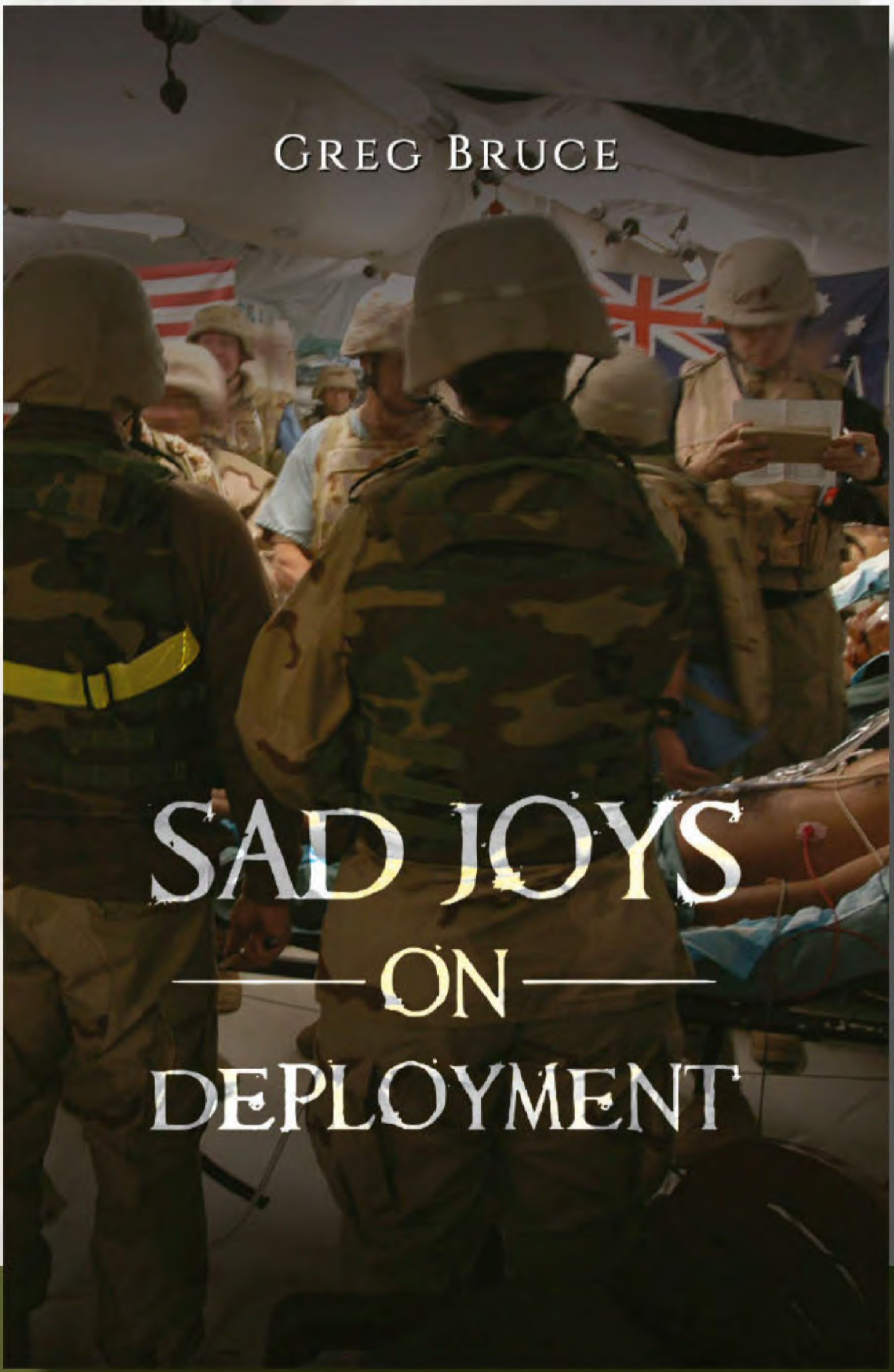
VISIT SOLDIERS OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE

IMJIN 70

The Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum is commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Battle of the Imjin River with a series of events. This includes a service in Gloucester Cathedral on 25 April 2021 and an 'Imjin70 Village' with stalls and cultural activities in August 2021.

For more information visit: www.soldiersofglos.com/imjin-70

A civilian surgeon is taken from his routine practice and finds that military surgery in war zones distressed by civil war, humanitarian disasters and battlefield conflict is very different from the comforts of home and civilian surgery.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Miss Pick Up

John Cruickshank VC, photographed in 2006, described confronting German submarines as a "thrill"

> "HE PRESSED HOME HIS ATTACK, AND RELEASED THE DEPTH CHARGES HIMSELF, STRADDLING THE SUBMARINE PERFECTLY. THE U-BOAT WAS SUNK"
>
> **John Cruickshank's VC citation**

© Getty

Heroes of the Victoria Cross

JOHN CRUICKSHANK

In the summer of 1944, with Britain's convoys still under threat, a young pilot sustained horrific injuries in a brutal duel with a German U-boat

WORDS **CHARLES GINGER**

As the blanket of clouds parted above the calm surface of the Norwegian Sea, John Appleton, a radar operator aboard a Catalina seaplane, knew he'd found something. The metallic hulk was still some way off, but the equipment before him was building a picture with every mile flown. Slicing through the skies at 95 knots, Appleton knew it wouldn't be long before they were above the unidentified vessel, a ship he and his fellow crew members would otherwise have missed given the lateness of the hour.

Rising to stand behind the captain and pilot of the plane, John Cruickshank, Appleton informed his superior of what he'd seen. Initially the crew believed the ship was likely an Allied destroyer, so Cruickshank called for the colours of the day to be fired from a pistol and the letters of the day flashed towards the hopefully friendly seafarers. No return signal was forthcoming. The plane was heading straight for a German U-boat.

Sounding the warning klaxon to alert the rest of the crew, Cruickshank honed in on the submarine (later identified as U-361) at a speed of two miles a minute while his comrades manned machine guns and readied depth charges. This far west of the coast of Norway, above the icy waters surrounding the Lofoten Islands, whichever machine lost the impending fight would be at nature's mercy. The heroism of one man would ensure the survival of the majority of his men and later earn him a VC in recognition of his incredible courage.

Prior to the outbreak of WWII, Cruickshank had been set for a career in banking. Born in Aberdeen on 20 May 1920, he had enjoyed an excellent level of education prior to joining the Commercial Bank in Edinburgh. But the demands of banking did nothing to sate Cruickshank's enthusiasm for action, and after a year of serving as an apprentice he signed up to the Territorial Army, joining the ranks of the Royal Artillery in May 1939. However, a life manning monstrous guns of war was not to be young Cruickshank's destiny.

In 1941 he transferred to the RAF, which had only the year before defeated the Luftwaffe in the Battle of Britain. Following training in North America, Cruickshank was given his wings in the summer of 1942. By March the following year he had been assigned to No. 210 Squadron.

At the time of Cruickshank's ascent into the ranks of the RAF the Battle of the Atlantic was still raging, a seemingly endless struggle between the Allies and Axis powers for dominance of the vital sea lanes that, if wrested from the enemy, could determine the outcome of the war. Cruickshank's squadron was stationed at Sullom Voe in the Shetlands, and it was from this seaplane base that RAF Coastal Command flew out to aid the crucial supply convoys attempting to cross the Atlantic and Arctic oceans, vast stretches of water teeming with German U-boats.

On the afternoon of 17 July 1944, Cruickshank, aged just 24, flew his Catalina Mark IVA off the tarmac at Sullom Voe and out over the Norwegian Sea. The task was a simple but potentially lethal one: guard the

Cruickshank and his crew were tasked with protecting the Home Fleet as it sailed back from its failed mission to destroy the Tirpitz (pictured)

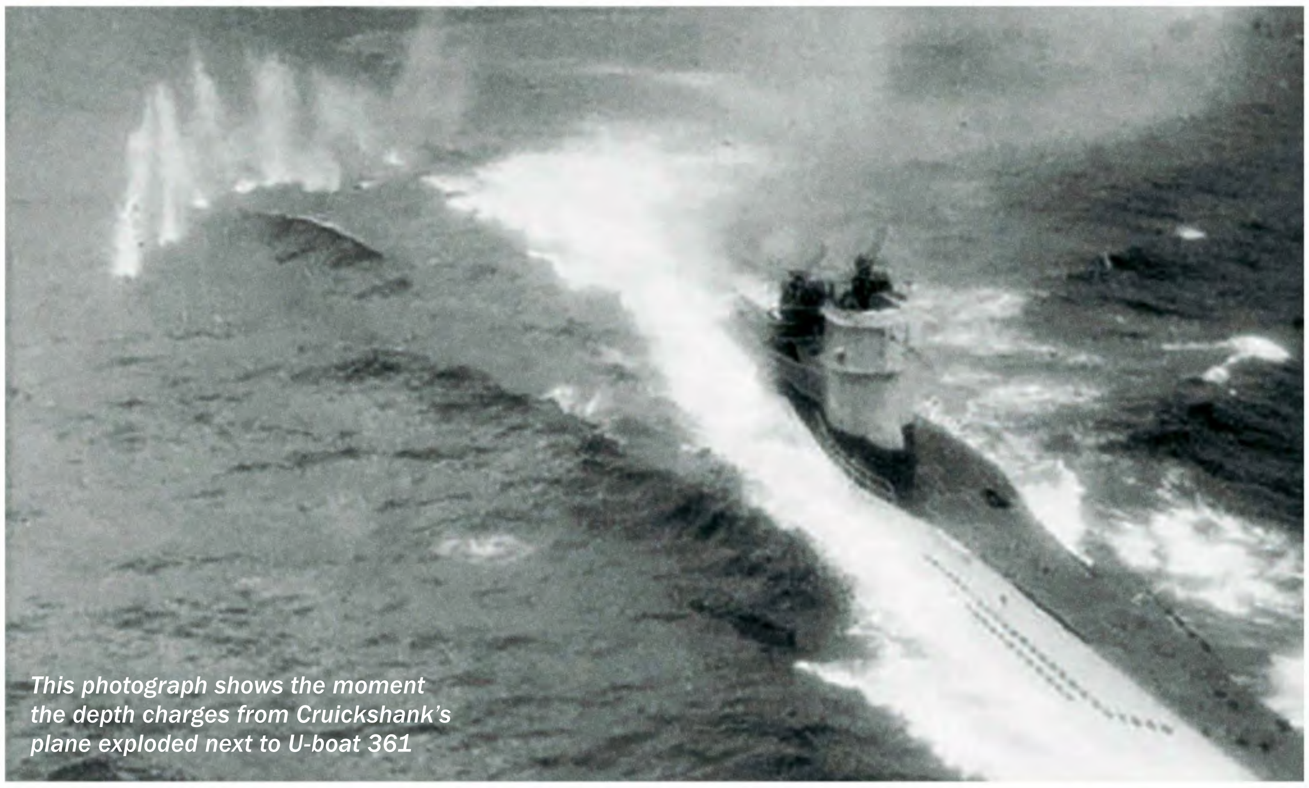
© Getty

British Home Fleet as it sailed back from its doomed mission to sink the most infamous German warship of the entire conflict, the Tirpitz. It was to be a mission that none aboard the aircraft would ever forget.

As the silhouette of the U-boat came into view Cruickshank's crew readied to unleash the plane's depth charges. Diving into a storm of gunfire directed straight at them from the submarine's arsenal (which consisted of two 20mm machine guns and a 37mm gun), the Catalina flew straight over the conning tower before wheeling away from the flak. In an interview conducted in 1995, Appleton recalled expecting to glance out of the window and watch the stricken enemy vessel slip beneath the waves: "I immediately went aft, absolutely certain I would see the destruction of the U-boat. When I got there I saw a couple of irate crew members. I said, 'What's the matter?' and they said, 'Look!' and they pointed to the two wings, and there were the six depth charges, still there."

For some unknown mechanical reason, the plane's depth charges had failed to release, simultaneously sparing the Germans below (who were making no attempt to dive to safety) and costing Cruickshank and his men the element of surprise. Undeterred, the captain turned back around for a second run.

This time the Germans' gunfire was far more accurate, with countless bullets slamming into the plane's hull and punching through into the interior. Yet Cruickshank didn't pull up, aiming instead directly for the submarine's conning tower. This time the depth charges fell free, blasting a gash in the U-boat that would eventually condemn it to a watery grave.

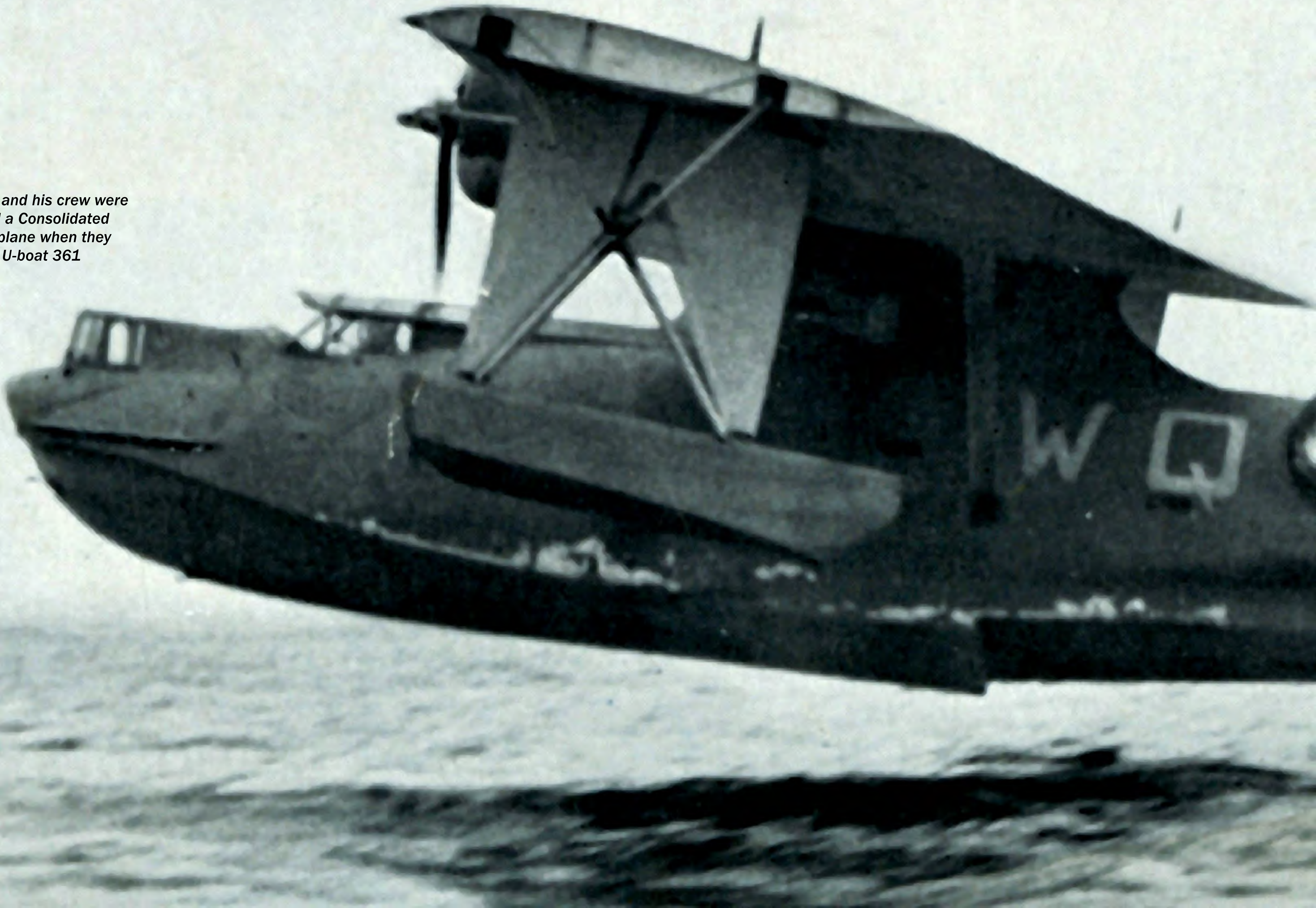

This photograph shows the moment the depth charges from Cruickshank's plane exploded next to U-boat 361

Source: Wiki / PD / Gov

Roaring back up into the sky, the bullet-riddled Catalina banked and made for home, the severity of the damage it had sustained becoming increasingly clear with every strained second. One of the U-boat's rounds had struck a shell inside the plane, causing it to explode. As flames licked at the roof the mechanic and bunk compartments filled with smoke. However, this was the least of the crew's problems.

Tragically, a 37mm shell had torn through the nose of the plane, leaving navigator John Dixon, in Appleton's words, "blown to pieces". Fortunately, Cruickshank had survived the initial impact, but his body was shattered from 72 wounds, including grave injuries to his chest and at least ten separate wounds to his lower body. Standing behind him at the time of impact, Appleton got a clear view of the desperate situation: "I looked at the skipper and I saw his trouser legs were blood-soaked, and he hadn't said a word. He was still flying the aircraft."

Aware that without immediate attention the captain would succumb to his wounds, Appleton scrambled to locate a first aid kit and removed a pair of scissors from inside it. He began to cut away at the crimson material of Cruickshank's trousers in a bid to locate his wounds and stop the bleeding. Suddenly, Cruickshank paled and slid from his seat.



Cruickshank and his crew were flying aboard a Consolidated Catalina seaplane when they encountered U-boat 361

With fellow crew member Jack Garnett assuming control of the aircraft, Appleton, with the help of Ian Fidler, carefully manoeuvred Cruickshank's limp frame to the rear of the plane. "It was obvious he was badly wounded," recalled Appleton. "You could tell from his colour and the blood everywhere."

The pair laid Cruickshank down on a bunk, fearing he wouldn't last long. "I thought he was mortally wounded. I wanted to make him as comfortable as possible," said Appleton. Bandaging Cruickshank's legs and giving him water, Appleton draped him in blankets and spare overalls before opening the first aid kit once more. Inside lay a row of tubes filled with morphine. Protocol at the time required the letter 'M' to be drawn in blood on the patient's forehead along with the time at which the morphine was administered so that medical personnel tending to the person later would be aware their charge already had the drug in their bloodstream. But Appleton wouldn't need to worry – a groggy Cruickshank pushed the needle away, refusing to slip into unconsciousness while his men were still in danger.

While Appleton tended to Cruickshank the crew radioed back to base to inform them of the attack on the submarine, Dixon's death and the crew's injuries. With only 450 gallons of fuel left and a badly mauled crew, Garnett asked for a weather report from their Shetland base. Eventually their comrades on land were able to pinpoint the plane's location and provide them with a single bearing, giving the crew a course to follow. Dumping the guns and ammunition on board in order to maintain their altitude, the men pressed for home through the pitch-black night.

> **"BY PRESSING HOME THE SECOND ATTACK IN HIS GRAVELY WOUNDED CONDITION AND CONTINUING HIS EXERTIONS ON THE RETURN JOURNEY WITH HIS STRENGTH FAILING ALL THE TIME, HE SERIOUSLY PREJUDICED HIS CHANCE OF SURVIVAL"**
>
> **John Cruickshank's VC citation**

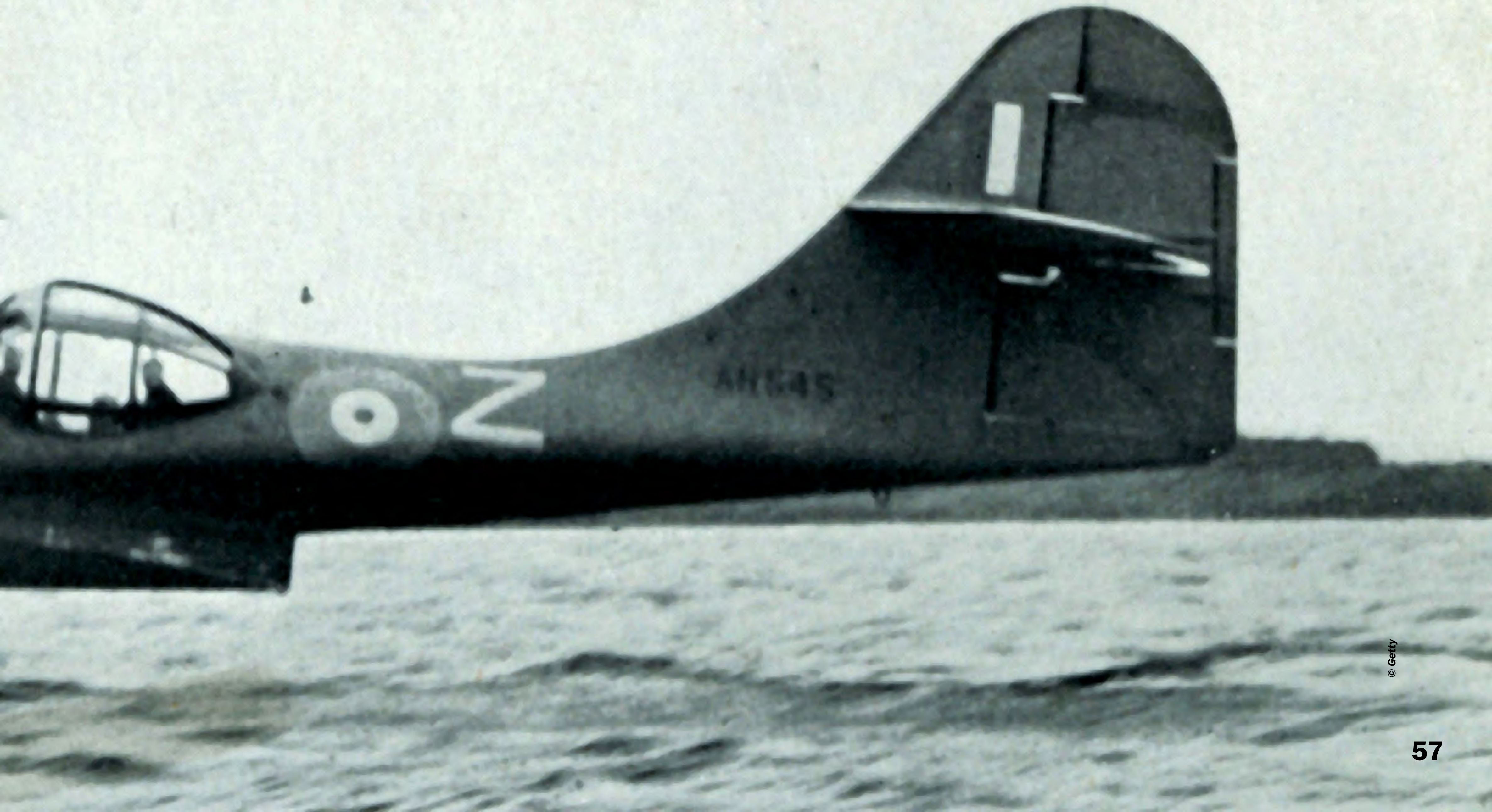
Finally, five-and-a-half hours after the assault on the U-boat, the Catalina found itself above base. As soon as Appleton informed Cruickshank of their location the severely wounded captain insisted on being helped back into the cockpit, explaining that he didn't feel Garnett and Fidler had the experience to land the plane in the dark. Once in position, Cruickshank maintained altitude and issued orders until he deemed it safe for the plane to touch down. An hour after arriving above its intended destination, the Catalina landed safely in water off an emergency landing beach and ran up onto the shore so the plane could be recovered.

His crew safe, Cruickshank collapsed, exhausted by his wounds and the task of keeping a battered plane airborne. He received a blood transfusion before being rushed to hospital. Remarkably, he survived his 72 injuries, but his flying career was over.

After a spell recovering from his ordeal, Cruickshank embarked on a tour of integral war-time locations across the UK, signing autographs and generally trying to maintain the spirits of the nation's workers. He had received his VC a month after the attack, instantly becoming a national hero. The final part of his citation read: "By pressing home the second attack in his gravely wounded condition and continuing his exertions on the return journey with his strength failing all the time, he seriously prejudiced his chance of survival even if the aircraft safely reached its base. Throughout, he set an example of determination, fortitude and devotion to duty in keeping with the highest traditions of the Service."

In 1946 Cruickshank left the RAF and returned to life in banking, retiring in 1977. Speaking in 2004 after witnessing the unveiling of the first national monument to Coastal Command, Cruickshank revealed his surprise at being awarded a VC: "When they told me that I was to get the VC it was unbelievable. Decorations didn't enter my head."

On 20 May 2020 Cruickshank celebrated his 100th birthday, becoming the first VC recipient to do so. He is also the last living recipient of the medal from WWII, a badge of honour awarded to a man who put his duty to his country before his own life and bears the scars to prove it.



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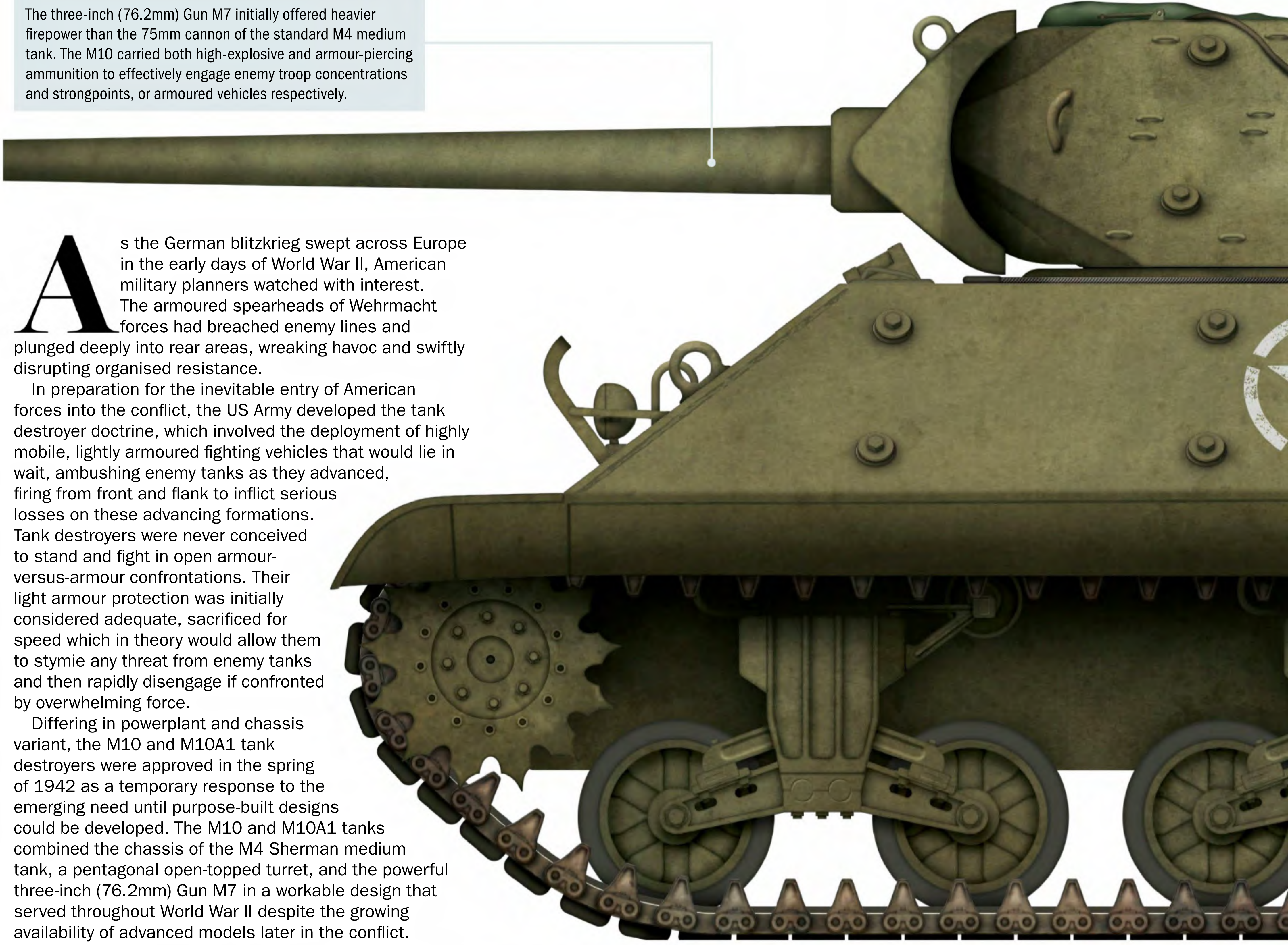
M10 & M10A1 TANK DESTROYER

Developed in response to German offensive success early in World War II, the M10 and M10A1 tank destroyers were widely deployed

WORDS **MICHAEL E HASKEW**



MAIN ARMAMENT
The three-inch (76.2mm) Gun M7 initially offered heavier firepower than the 75mm cannon of the standard M4 medium tank. The M10 carried both high-explosive and armour-piercing ammunition to effectively engage enemy troop concentrations and strongpoints, or armoured vehicles respectively.

As the German blitzkrieg swept across Europe in the early days of World War II, American military planners watched with interest. The armoured spearheads of Wehrmacht forces had breached enemy lines and plunged deeply into rear areas, wreaking havoc and swiftly disrupting organised resistance.

In preparation for the inevitable entry of American forces into the conflict, the US Army developed the tank destroyer doctrine, which involved the deployment of highly mobile, lightly armoured fighting vehicles that would lie in wait, ambushing enemy tanks as they advanced, firing from front and flank to inflict serious losses on these advancing formations. Tank destroyers were never conceived to stand and fight in open armour-versus-armour confrontations. Their light armour protection was initially considered adequate, sacrificed for speed which in theory would allow them to stymie any threat from enemy tanks and then rapidly disengage if confronted by overwhelming force.

Differing in powerplant and chassis variant, the M10 and M10A1 tank destroyers were approved in the spring of 1942 as a temporary response to the emerging need until purpose-built designs could be developed. The M10 and M10A1 tanks combined the chassis of the M4 Sherman medium tank, a pentagonal open-topped turret, and the powerful three-inch (76.2mm) Gun M7 in a workable design that served throughout World War II despite the growing availability of advanced models later in the conflict.

TURRET CONFIGURATION

The pentagonal, manually traversed open turret of the M10 reduced weight and provided an excellent field of vision for the commander but made the crew vulnerable to small-arms fire, shrapnel from shell bursts, and enemy infantry anti-tank squads.

> “TANK DESTROYERS WERE NEVER CONCEIVED TO STAND AND FIGHT IN OPEN ARMOUR-VERSUS-ARMOUR CONFRONTATIONS”

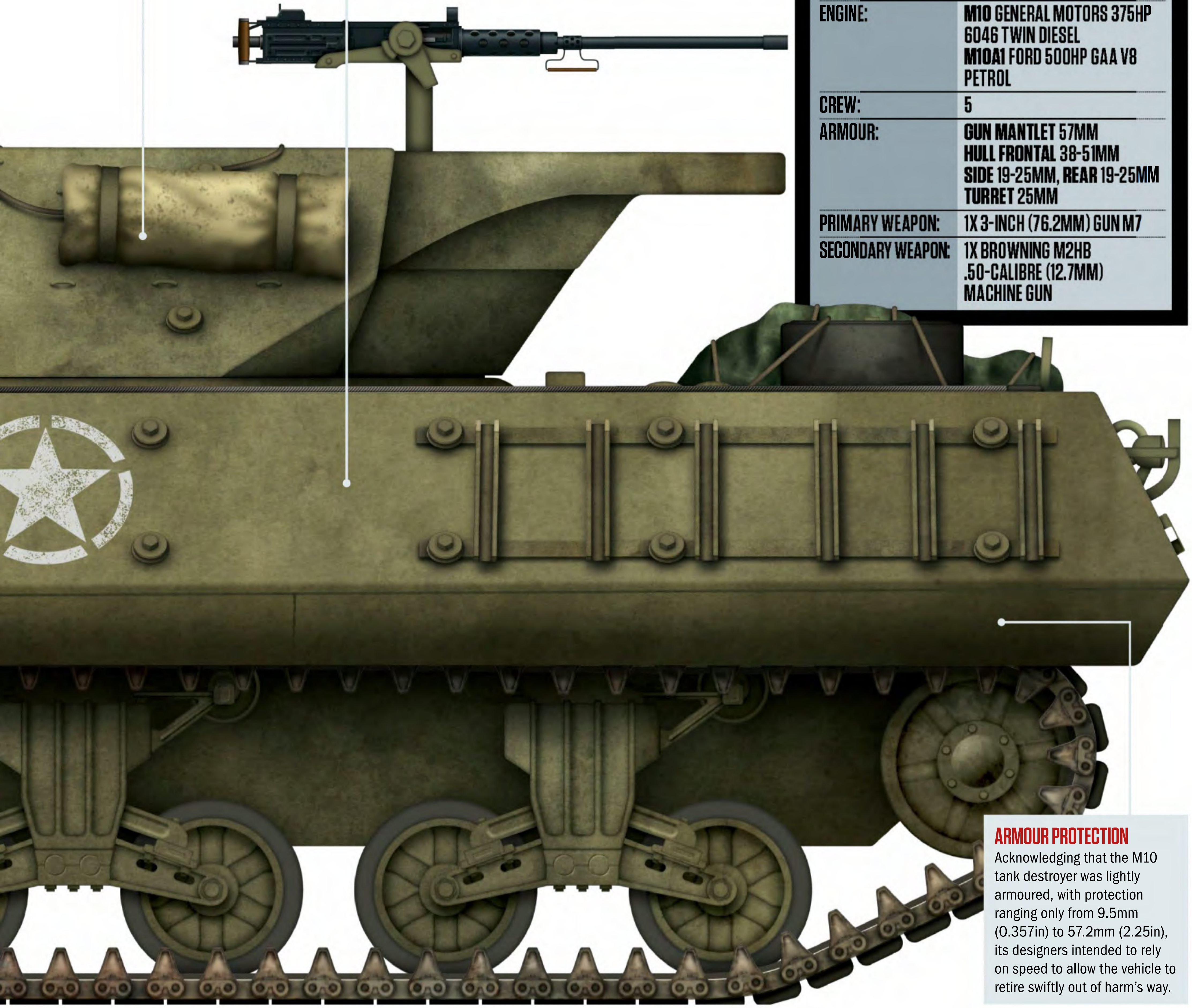
Image: Wiki / PD / Raymond Douglas Veydt

M10 & M10A1 TANK DESTROYER

COMMISSIONED:	SEPTEMBER 1942
ORIGIN:	USA
LENGTH:	6.83M (22FT, 4IN)
RANGE:	**M10** 320KM (198MI) **M10A1** 260KM (161MI)
ENGINE:	**M10** GENERAL MOTORS 375HP 6046 TWIN DIESEL **M10A1** FORD 500HP GAA V8 PETROL
CREW:	5
ARMOUR:	**GUN MANTLET** 57MM **HULL FRONTAL** 38-51MM **SIDE** 19-25MM, **REAR** 19-25MM **TURRET** 25MM
PRIMARY WEAPON:	1X 3-INCH (76.2MM) GUN M7
SECONDARY WEAPON:	1X BROWNING M2HB .50-CALIBRE (12.7MM) MACHINE GUN

HULL DESIGN

The distinctive chassis of the M4 Sherman medium tank, readily available in 1942, provided a workable platform for the tank destroyer with sloped armour, reliable suspension and ample space for interior crewmen.



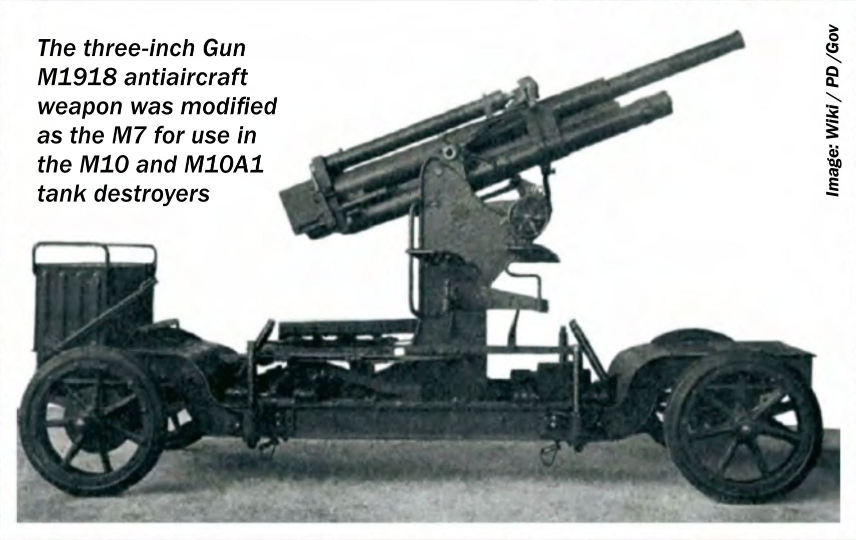
ARMOUR PROTECTION

Acknowledging that the M10 tank destroyer was lightly armoured, with protection ranging only from 9.5mm (0.357in) to 57.2mm (2.25in), its designers intended to rely on speed to allow the vehicle to retire swiftly out of harm’s way.

Illustration: Battlefield Design

ARMAMENT

The three-inch (76.2mm) Gun M7, main armament of the M10 and M10A1 tank destroyer, was developed for use in armoured vehicles from the three-inch Gun M1918, a World War I antiaircraft weapon. The M7 was ponderous and heavy for use in an armoured fighting vehicle, particularly a vehicle such as the tank destroyer, which relied on speed to evade direct combat with enemy tanks. However, the M7 was capable of firing a variety of ammunition, including high-explosive and armour-piercing rounds, depending on the enemy target at hand.



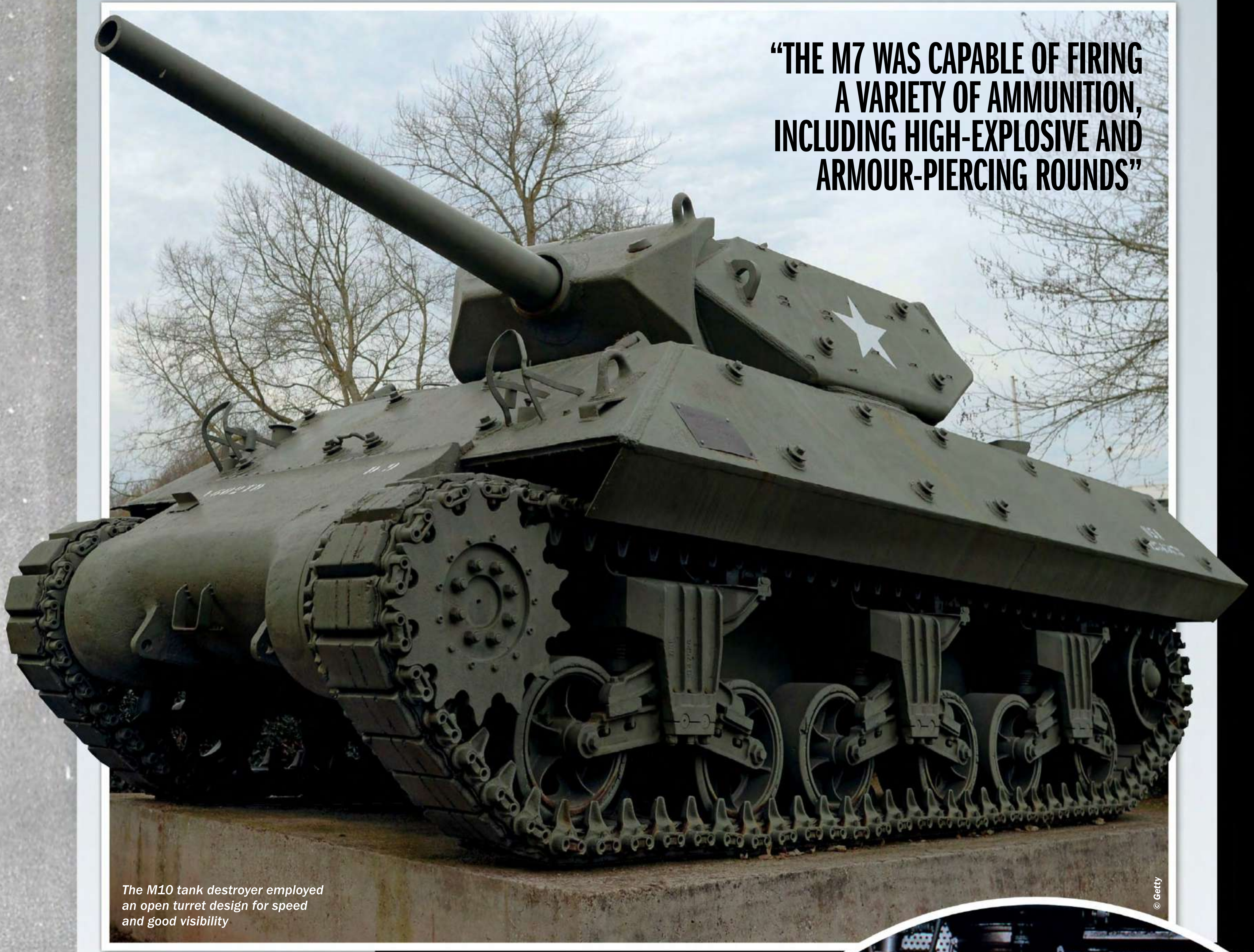
The three-inch Gun M1918 antiaircraft weapon was modified as the M7 for use in the M10 and M10A1 tank destroyers

Image: Wiki / PD /Gov

***Above:** Their three-inch main weapons prominently visible, two M10 tank destroyers prepare to cross a stream in Belgium*

Image: Wiki / PD /Gov

An American M10 tank destroyer fires its three-inch M7 weapon at a target in the town of Saint-Lo, June 1944



"THE M7 WAS CAPABLE OF FIRING A VARIETY OF AMMUNITION, INCLUDING HIGH-EXPLOSIVE AND ARMOUR-PIERCING ROUNDS"

The M10 tank destroyer employed an open turret design for speed and good visibility

© Getty

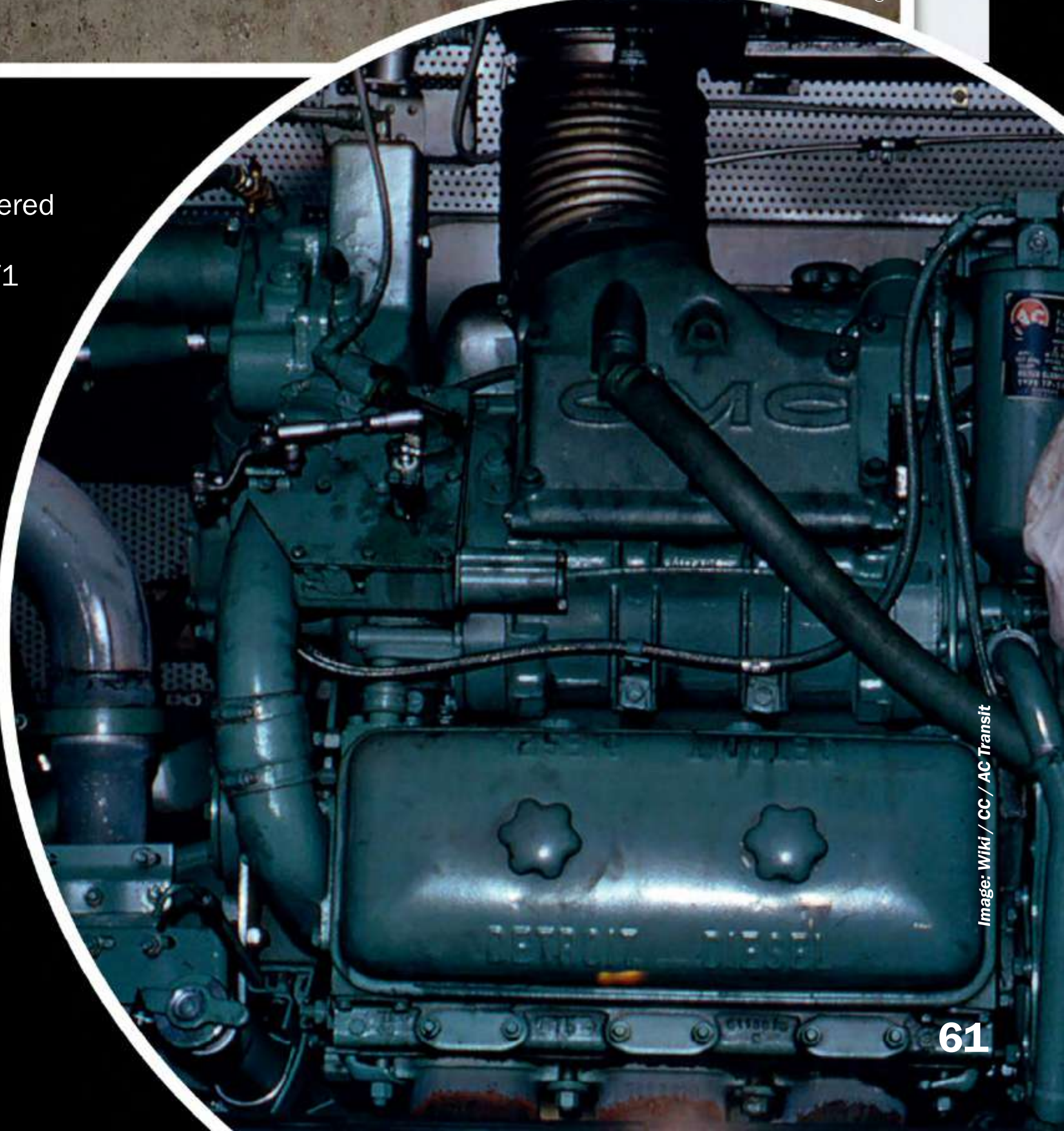
DESIGN

The M10 and M10A1 tank destroyers, produced concurrently, incorporated the chassis of the M4A2 and M4A3 Sherman medium tanks respectively. The design took advantage of the sloped armour, reliable powerplant and relatively thin armour of the Sherman, since the tank destroyer was intended to attack from concealed positions and utilise speed to evade direct combat with enemy tanks. An open-topped pentagonal turret facilitated the commander's vision, allowed swift evacuation, and reduced overall weight. However, the crew was vulnerable to shell bursts, small-arms fire, hand grenades, shoulder-fired anti-tank weapons and infantry tank-killer teams. The turret rotated manually.

Image: Wiki / PD /Gov

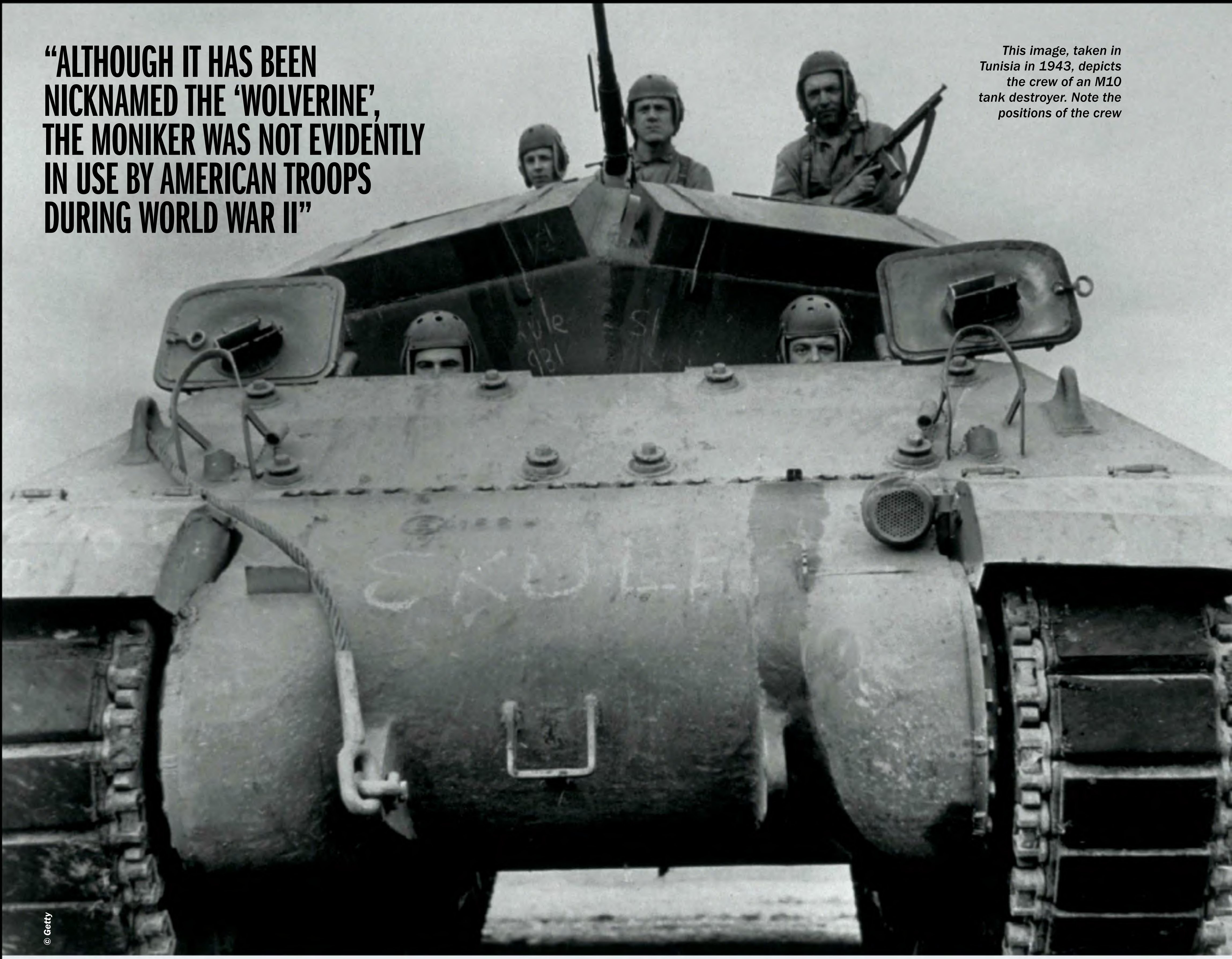
ENGINE

While the M10 tank destroyer was powered by the General Motors 6046 engine, a configuration of twin Detroit Diesel 6V71 engines tied to a single crankshaft, the M10A1 was powered by the Ford GAA eight-cylinder gasoline engine, a derivative of the V-12 aircraft engine. The V-12 was never mass-produced; however, demand for vehicle powerplants led to the cut-down GAA. The GM 6046 diesel produced 375 horsepower and provided continued mobility if one engine failed. The Ford GAA generated 450 horsepower. Top road speed was comparable at 48 km/h (30mph).



The General Motors 6046 diesel engine paired two Detroit Diesel 6-71 engines on a single crankshaft. Variants are still in use

Image: Wiki/ CC/ AC Transit



This image, taken in Tunisia in 1943, depicts the crew of an M10 tank destroyer. Note the positions of the crew

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"ALTHOUGH IT HAS BEEN NICKNAMED THE 'WOLVERINE', THE MONIKER WAS NOT EVIDENTLY IN USE BY AMERICAN TROOPS DURING WORLD WAR II"

CREW COMPARTMENT

The hull compartment of the M10 tank destroyer accommodated the driver and assistant driver/radio operator, seated forward and viewing surrounding terrain via periscopes. The driver sat to the left and operated the vehicle with a set of basic levers. The commander, gunner and loader were positioned in the open-topped pentagonal turret. The commander's folding seat was located to the right rear, while the gunner usually stood left of the main weapon, with a folding seat to his rear. The loader stood behind the gun, and the tank's ammunition was primarily stored in a series of sponsons.

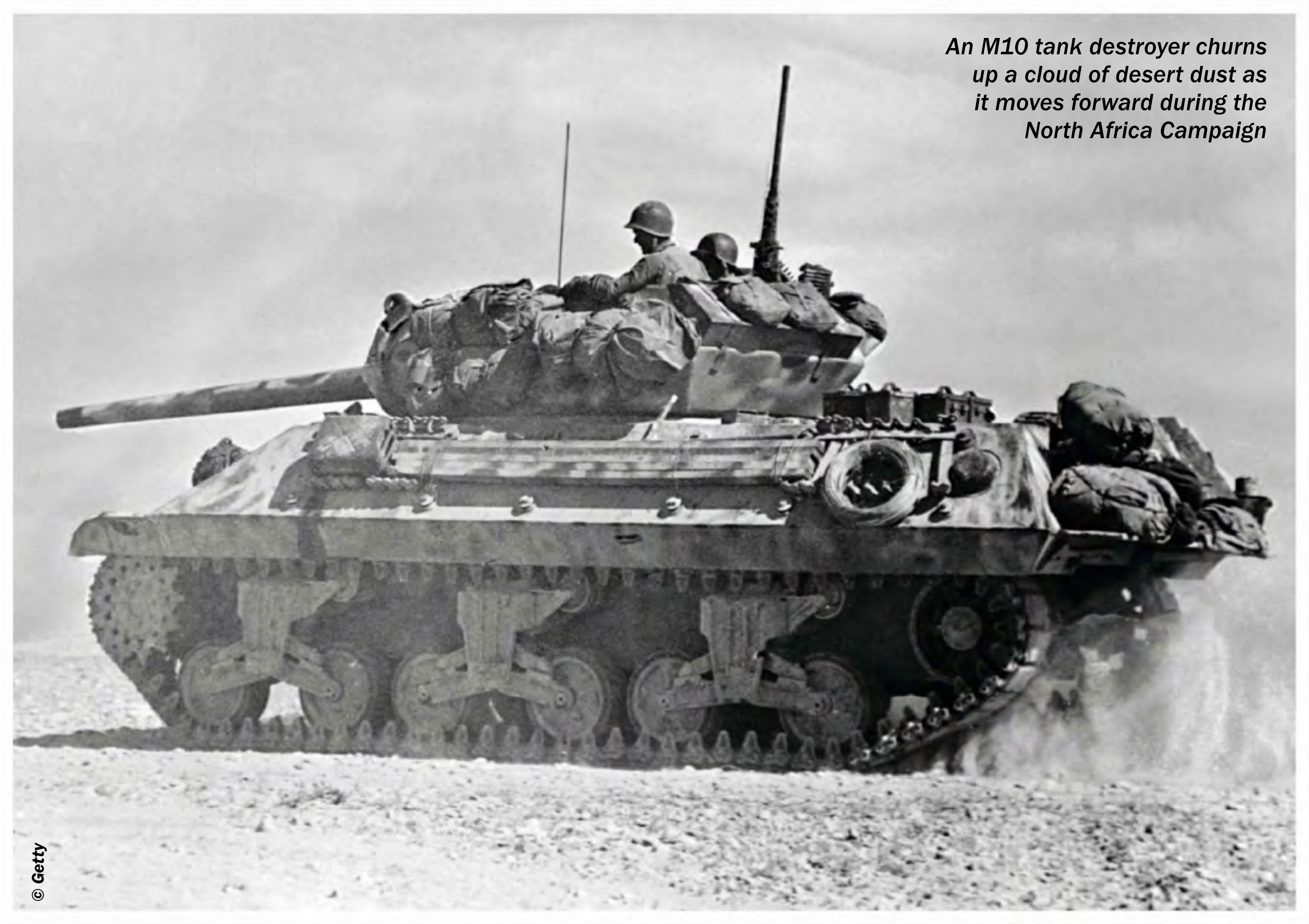
Crossing a bridge recently erected by engineers, members of an M10 tank destroyer crew are visible in the vehicle's open turret

© Alamy

SERVICE HISTORY

A total of 6,406 M10 and M10A1 tank destroyers were completed between September 1942 and December 1943 by General Motors and Ford Motor Company. Although it has been nicknamed the "Wolverine", the moniker was not evidently in use by American troops during World War II.

The M10 made its combat debut at the Battle of El Guettar in North Africa on 23 March, 1942, and served during the Italian Campaign, in northwest Europe, and the Pacific theatre, primarily as mobile artillery or in direct fire support roles as the tank destroyer doctrine waned. The M10 was provided to Britain, the Free French, and in limited numbers to the Soviet Union under Lend Lease. Compiling a respectable combat record, it remained in service through the end of World War II amid the introduction of the M36 tank destroyer with its 90mm gun. After the war, the M10 served with both Egyptian and Israeli forces until it was finally withdrawn in the mid-1960s.



An M10 tank destroyer churns up a cloud of desert dust as it moves forward during the North Africa Campaign

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A camouflaged M10 tank destroyer passes through a French village during operations in the autumn of 1944

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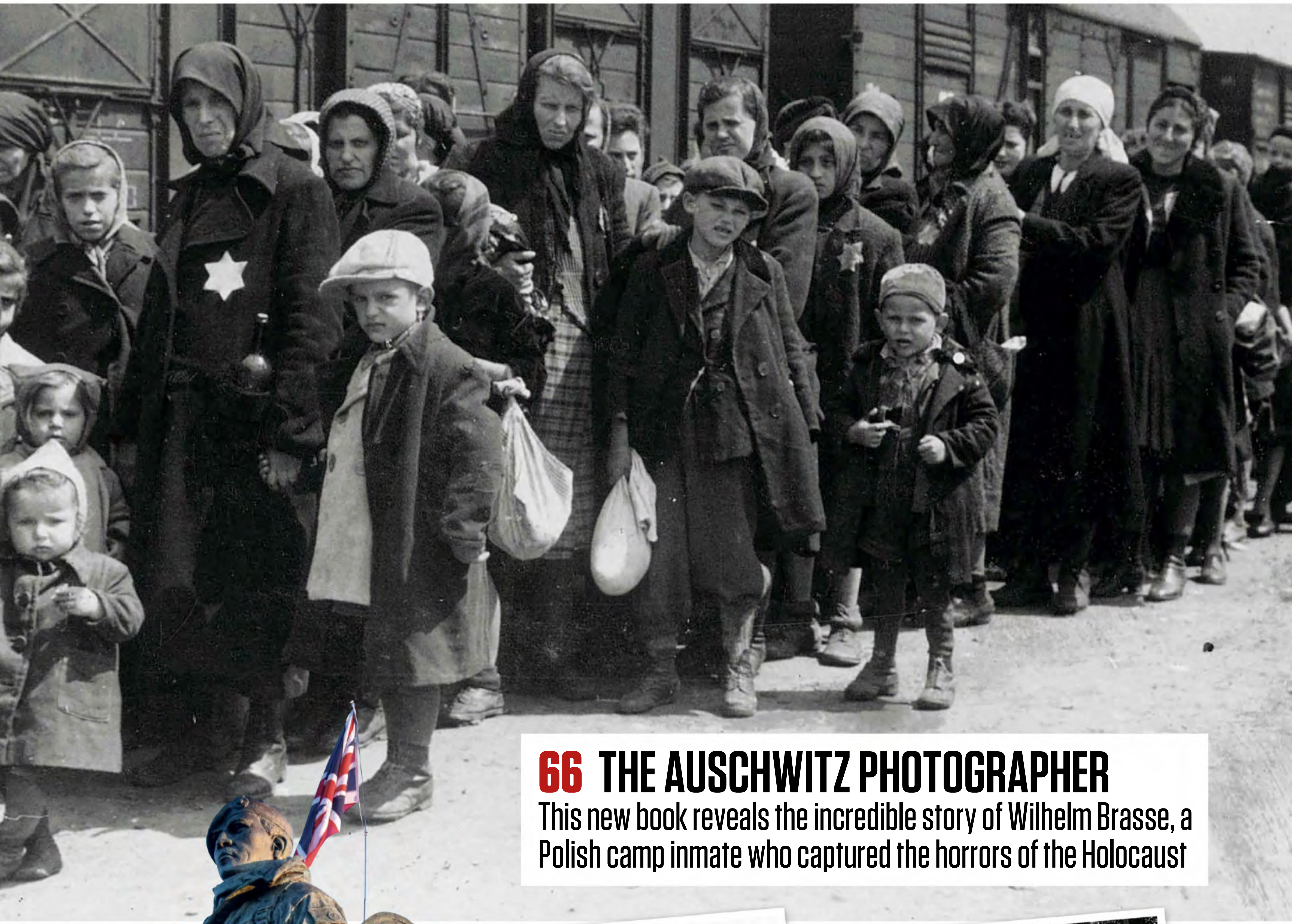

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This new book reveals the incredible story of Wilhelm Brasse, a Polish camp inmate who captured the horrors of the Holocaust

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THE AUSCHWITZ PHOTOGRAPHER

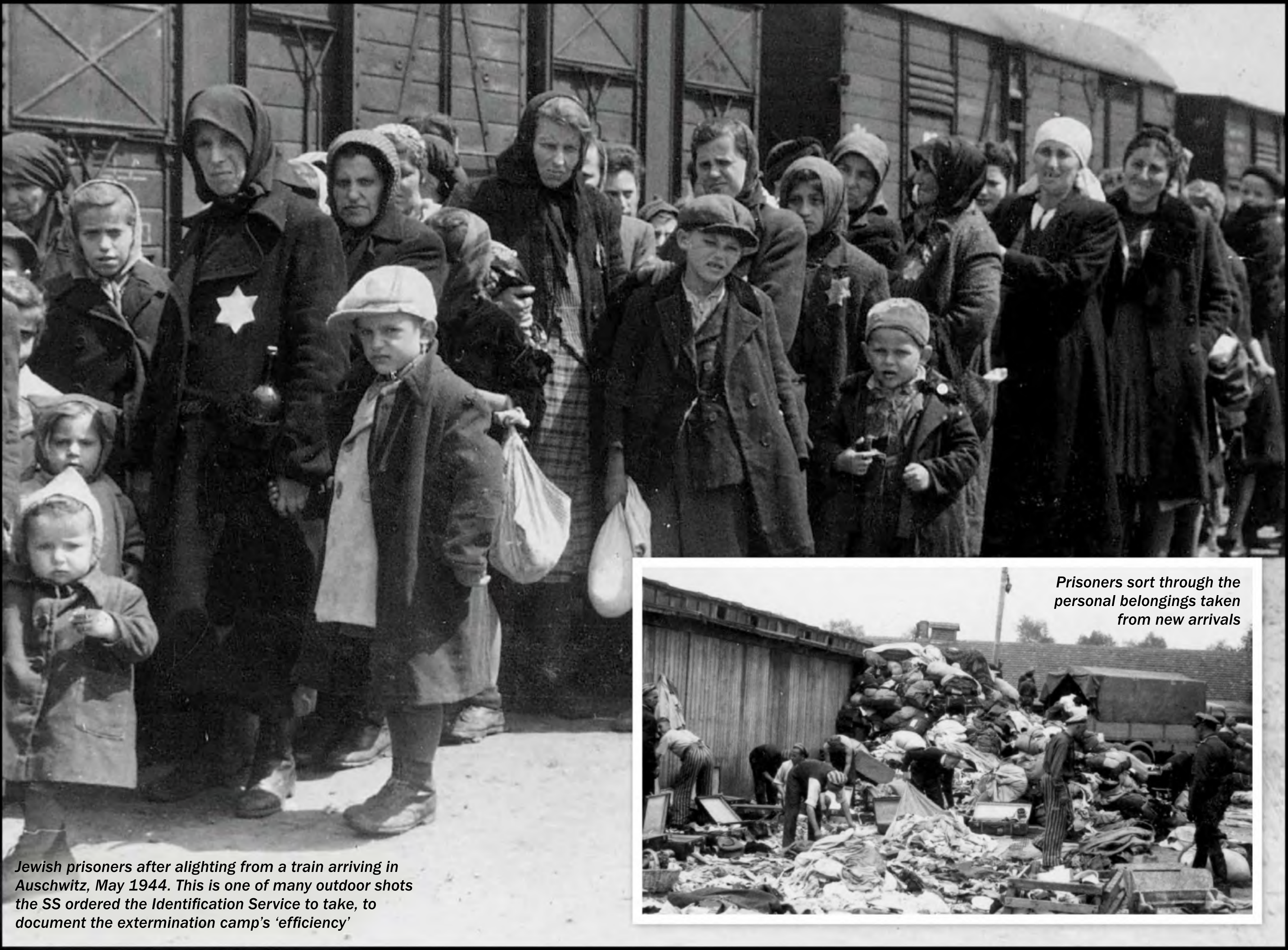
While imprisoned by the Nazis, Wilhelm Brasse was tasked with cataloguing horrific scenes behind the wire, as well as the faces of his fellow prisoners

After the invasion of Poland, a young photographer named Wilhelm Brasse refused to join the Nazis and was arrested while trying to escape to Hungary. Transferred to Auschwitz on 31 August 1940, he was given the prisoner number 3444 and forced into hard labour expanding the camp. Once his skills as a photographer and developer were realised, Brasse was put to work as part of the Erkennungsdienst, Auschwitz's Identification Service. Chief among his duties was to take photographs of inmates, and it's estimated Brasse took between 40,000 and 50,000 photographs of prisoners at the camp.

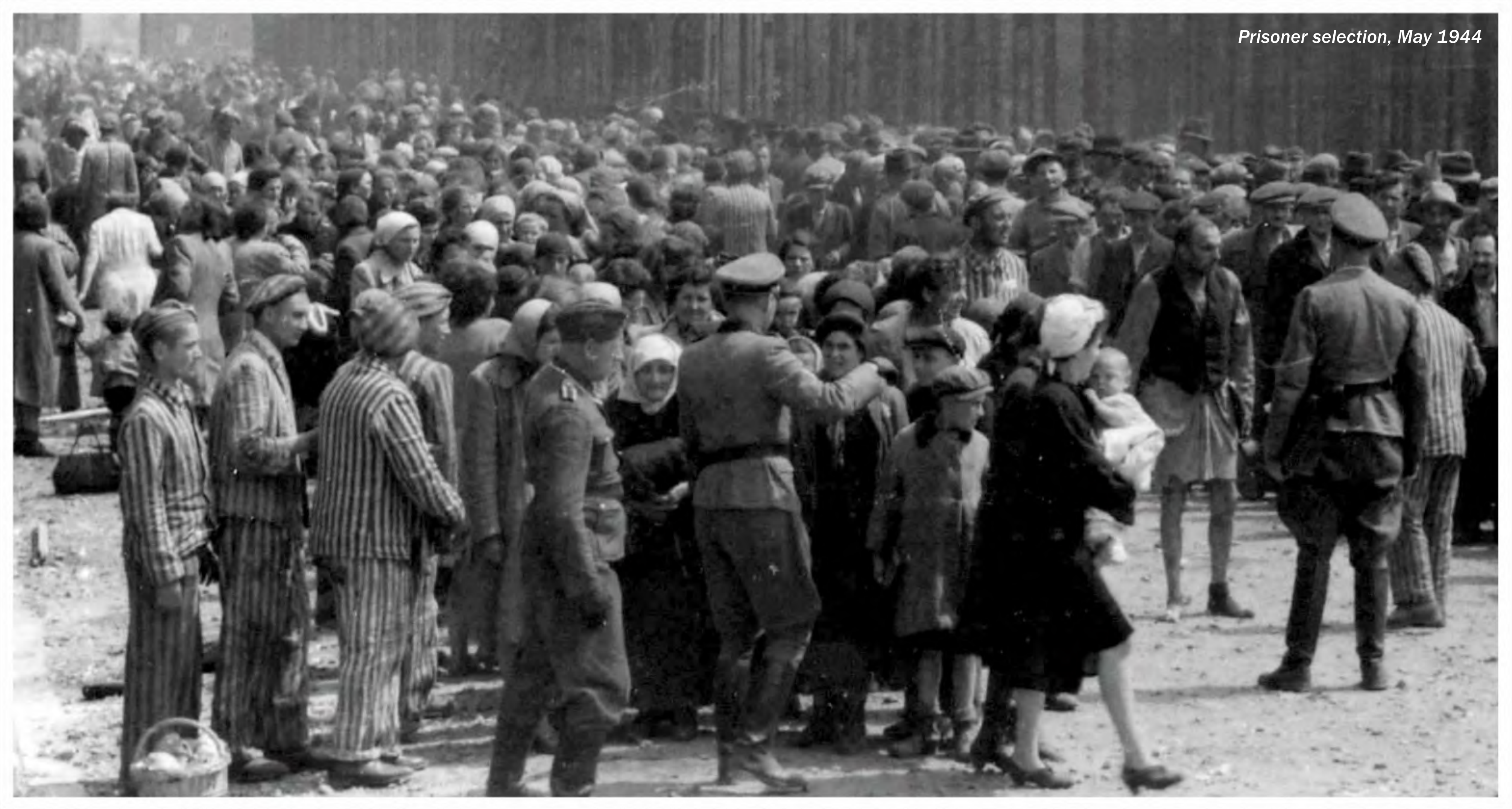
As well as his work for the Identification Service, Brasse's skills were called upon to capture keepsake portraits for the camp guards, and even to create colour postcards to be sold by his Nazi boss, SS Oberscharführer Bernhard Walter. He was also forced to catalogue the horrific medical experiments and unnecessary surgery carried out by the Nazis. In this work, Brasse encountered one of Auschwitz's most despicable war criminals, Josef Mengele, who conducted inhumane experiments on inmates.

In 1945, with the Red Army approaching the camp, Brasse was ordered to destroy the photographs but refused, choosing to hide the images so that the world would be able to see what had happened at Auschwitz. Though his images are now an indelible part of the dreadful but essential record of the Holocaust, Brasse's own story was largely untold. In their new book *The Auschwitz Photographer*, authors Luca Crippa and Maurizio Onnis have pieced together Brasse's story, including his life before the war and his experiences during imprisonment, using research from the Auschwitz-Birkenau Musuem and Yad Vashem Photo Archive in Jerusalem.

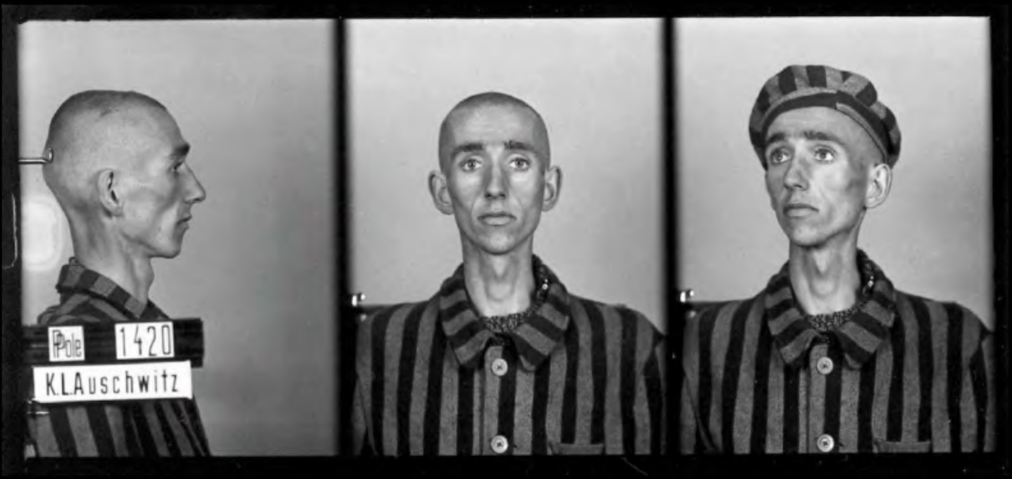
Wilhelm Brasse pictured in 1938, before his imprisonment in Auschwitz


Jewish prisoners after alighting from a train arriving in Auschwitz, May 1944. This is one of many outdoor shots the SS ordered the Identification Service to take, to document the extermination camp's 'efficiency'

Prisoners sort through the personal belongings taken from new arrivals

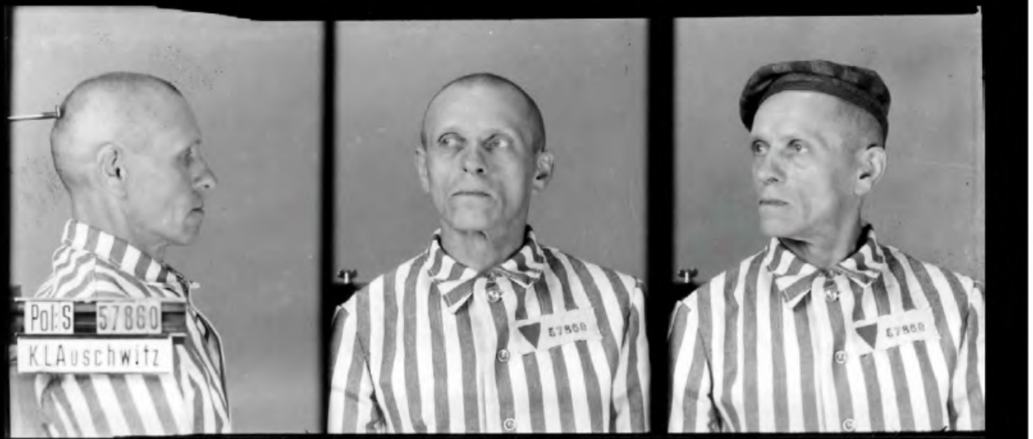


Prisoner selection, May 1944


PPole 1420
KLAuschwitz

Above: *Jozef Pysz, imprisoned in July 1940. Number 1420 PPole. He was one of the earliest prisoners in the camp*

Below: *Franz Slokau. Imprisoned in August 1942, number 57860 Pol:S (Slovenian political prisoner)*


Pol:S 57860
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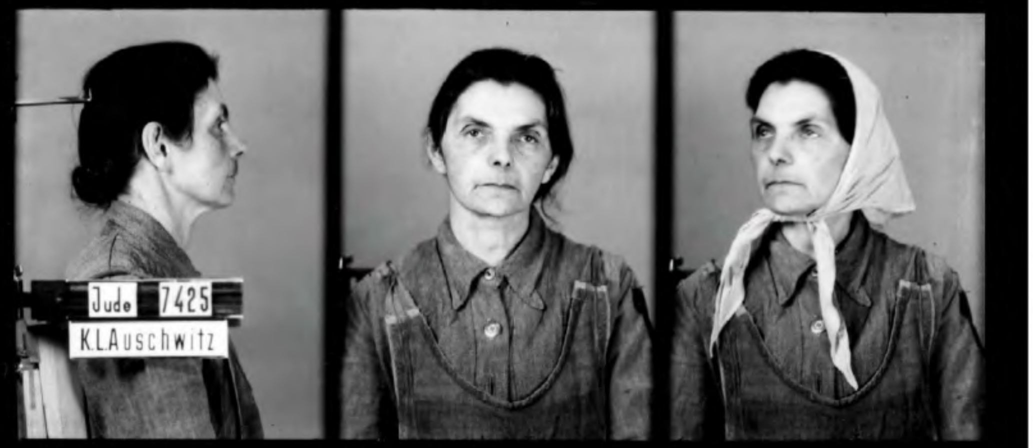
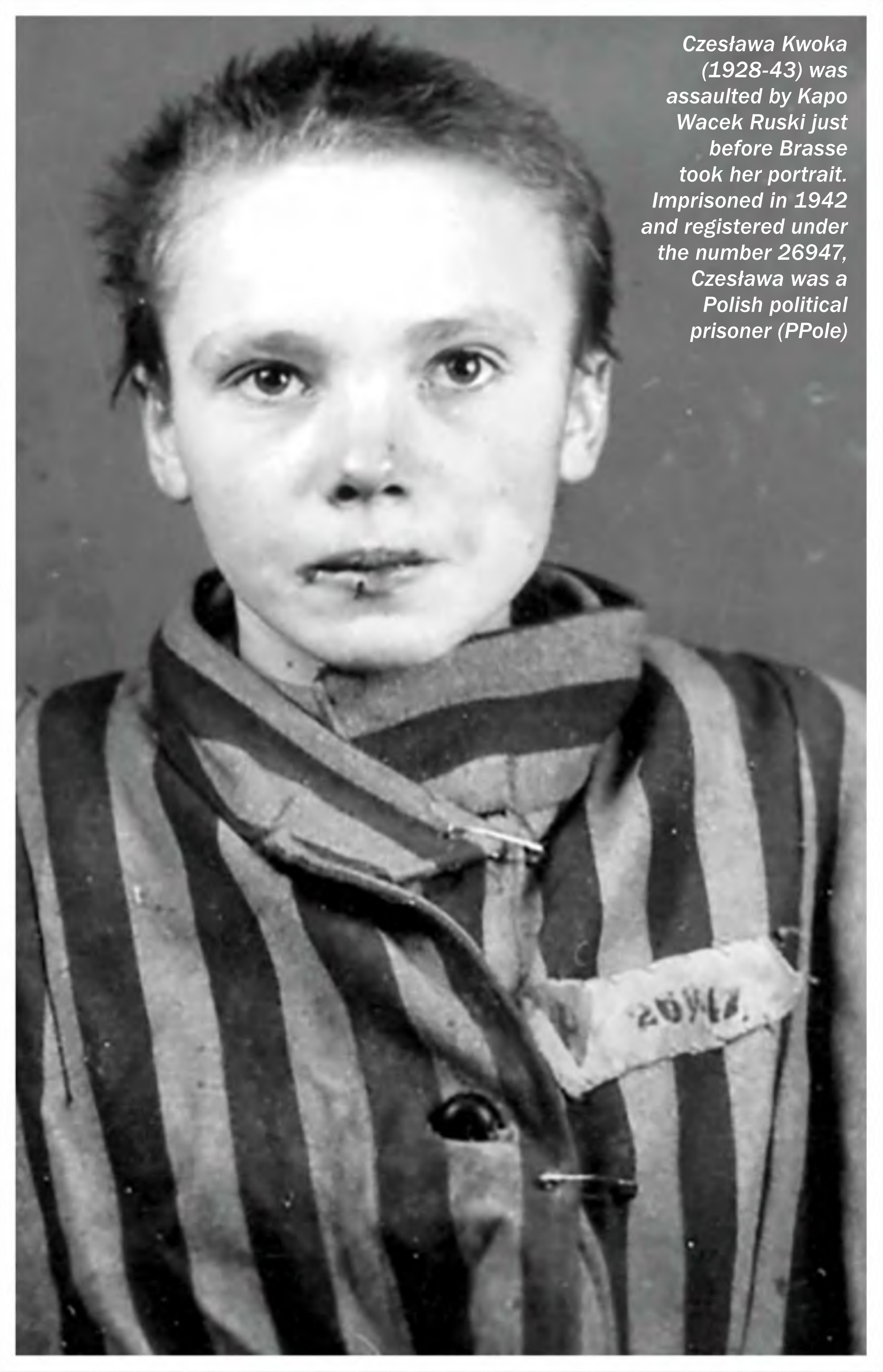
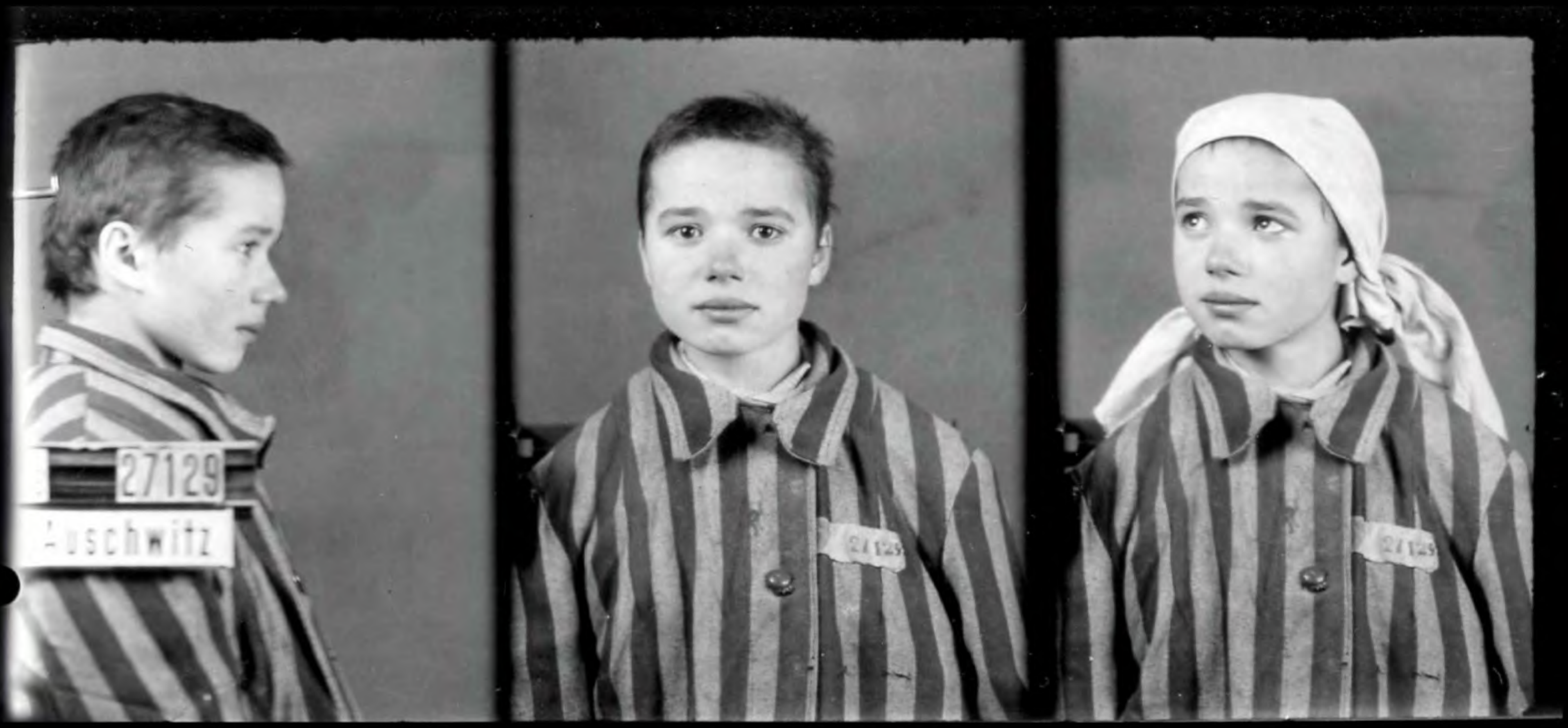
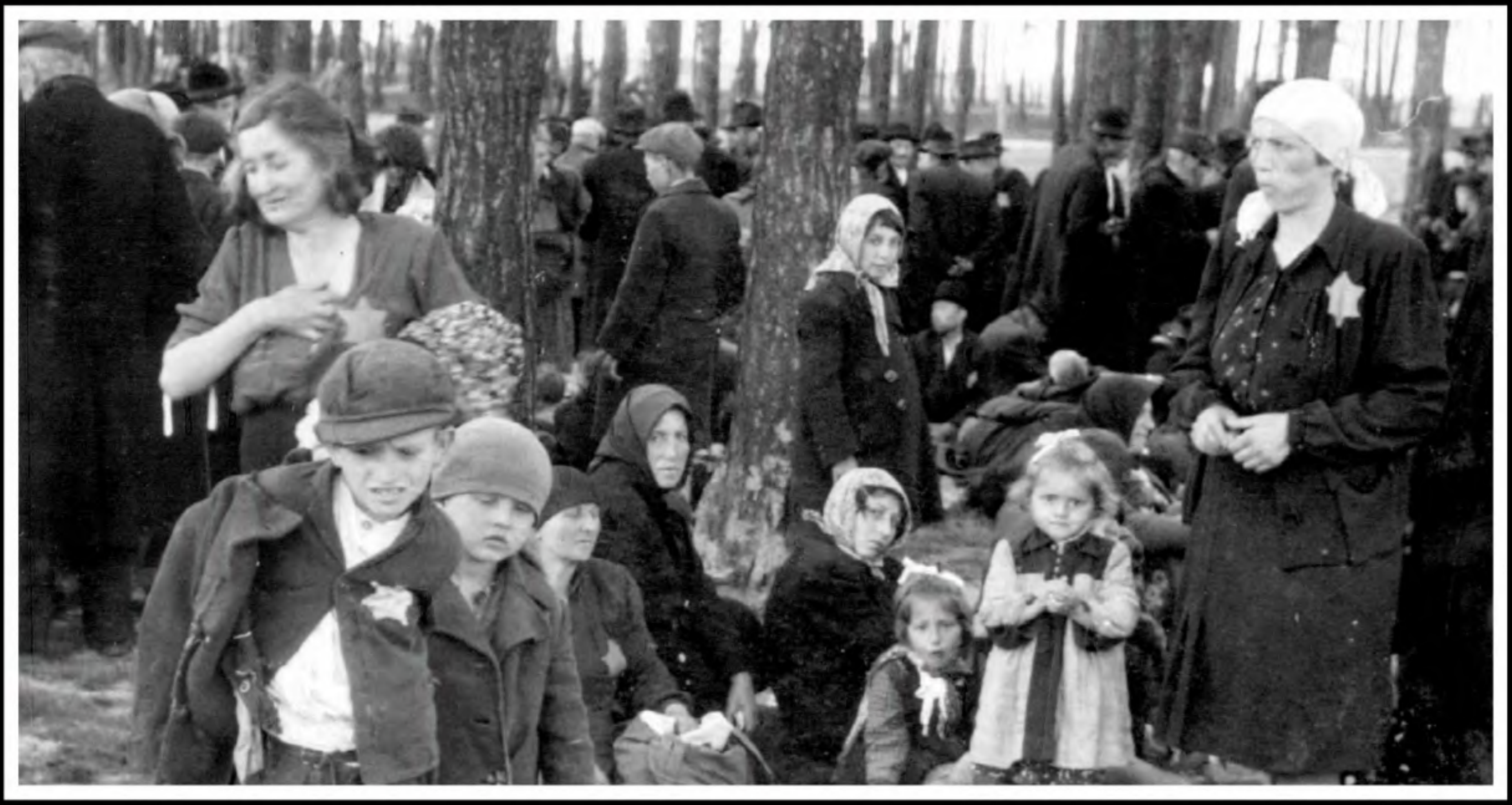

Jude 7425
KLAuschwitz

Above: *An unknown prisoner, imprisoned in May 1942. Number 7425 Jude (Jewish). Women had begun to arrive in the camp in March 1942*



Czesława Kwoka (1928-43) was assaulted by Kapo Wacek Ruski just before Brasse took her portrait. Imprisoned in 1942 and registered under the number 26947, Czesława was a Polish political prisoner (PPole)

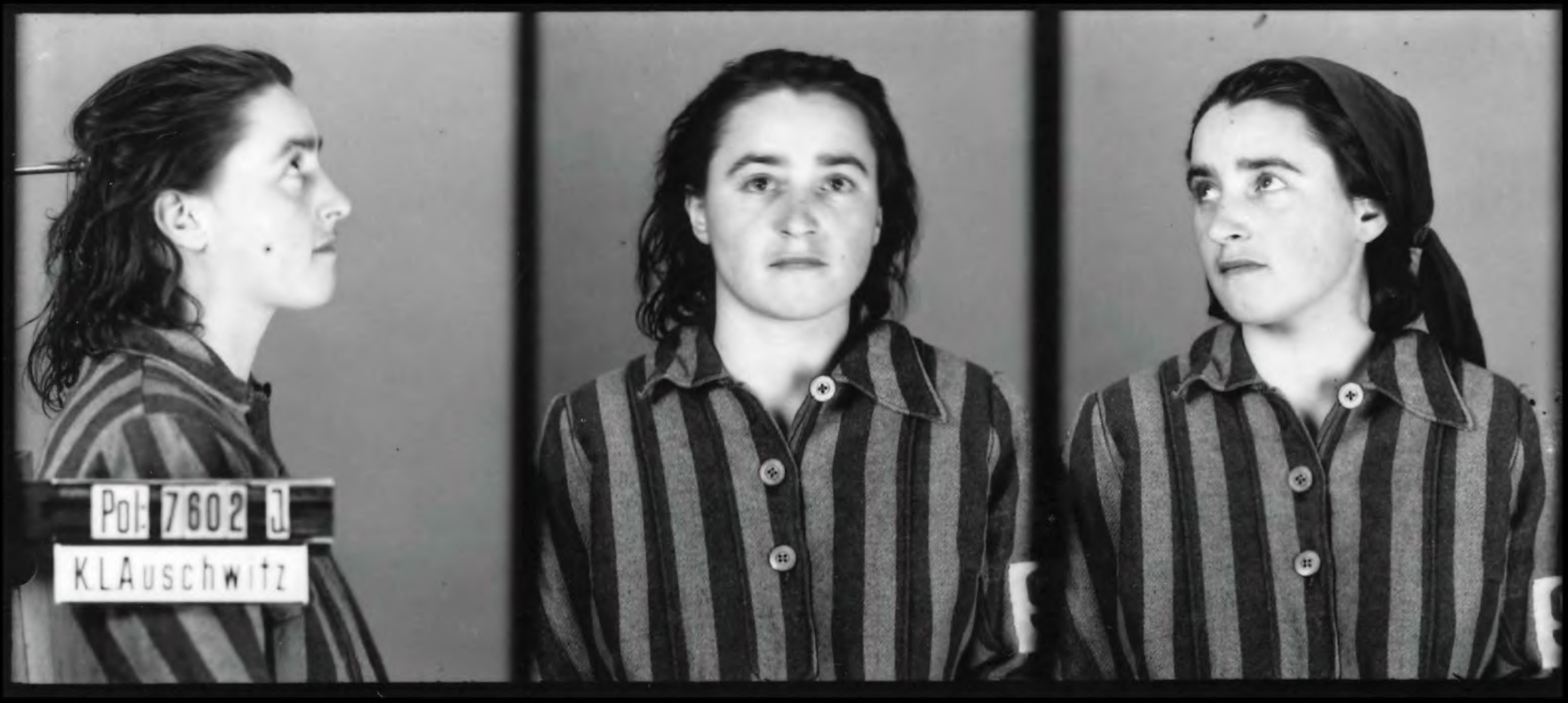


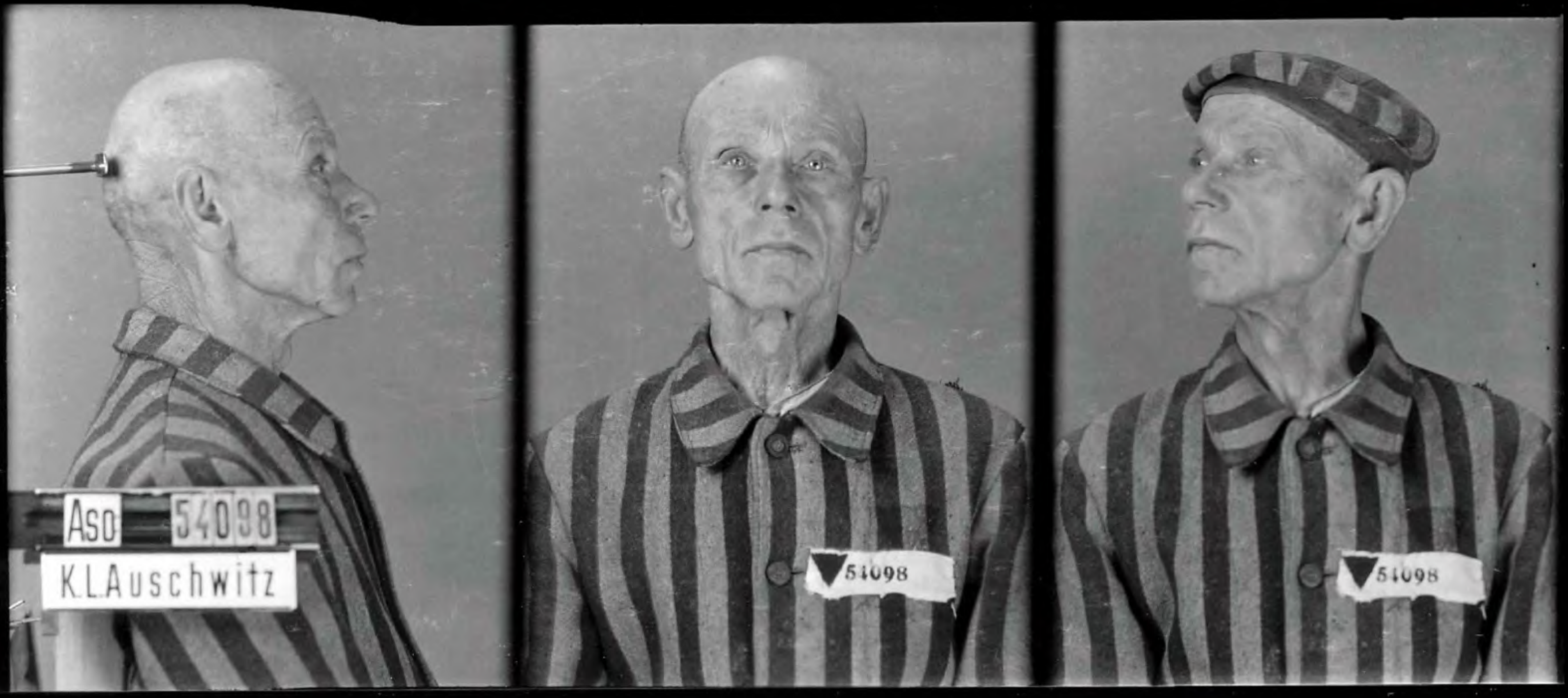


***Above:** Krystyna Trzesniewska (1929-43). A Polish political prisoner who was photographed by Brasse, Krystyna was taken to Auschwitz in 1942 with her father and was registered under the number 27129*

***Left:** Birkenau, Poland, May 1944. Jewish prisoners wait near gas chamber number 4, before being sent to their deaths*

***Below:** Stefania Stiebler. Imprisoned in June 1942, she was a Yugoslavian political prisoner and Jew – 7602 Pol:J – who worked in the camp offices and played an active role in the resistance movement*

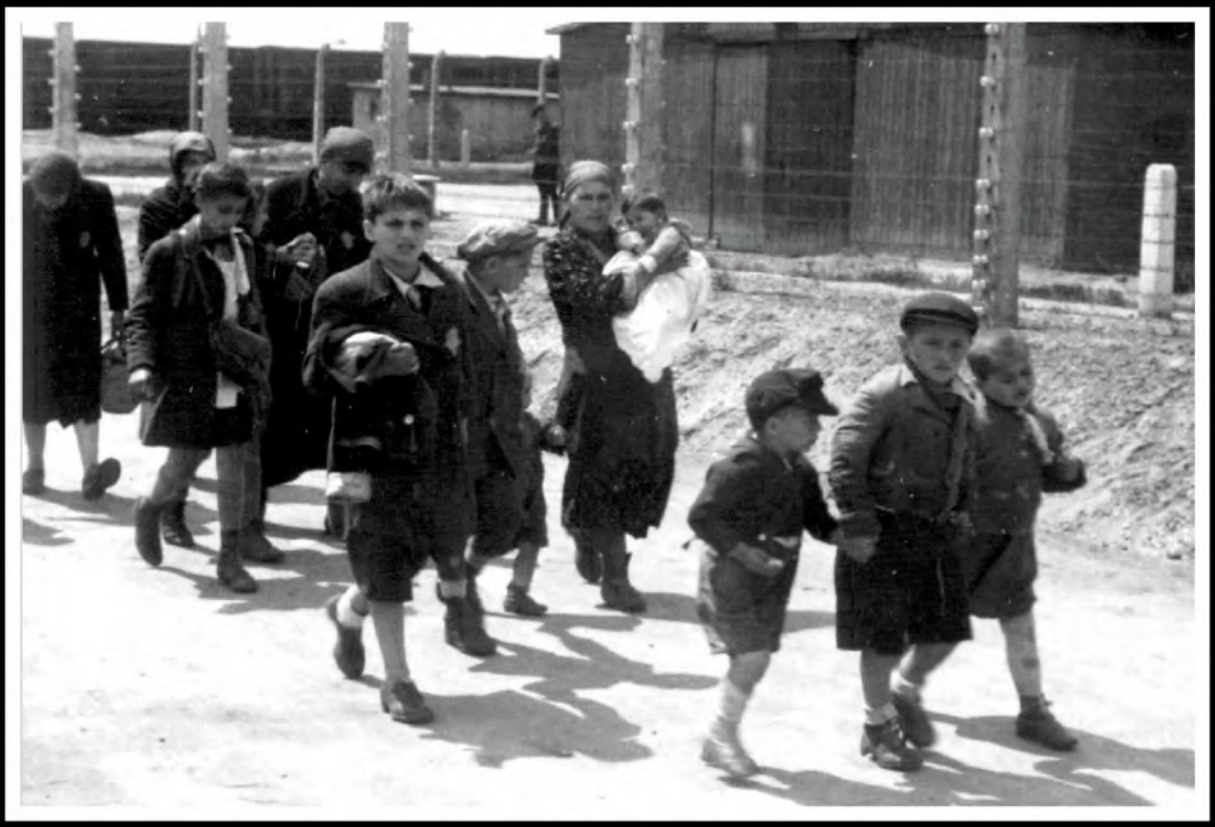


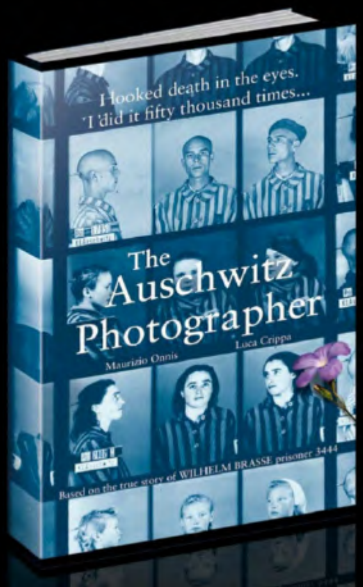

Aso 54098
K.L.Auschwitz
54098
54098

Above: *August Wittek (1874-1942). Imprisoned in July 1942, number 54098 Aso ('asocial')*

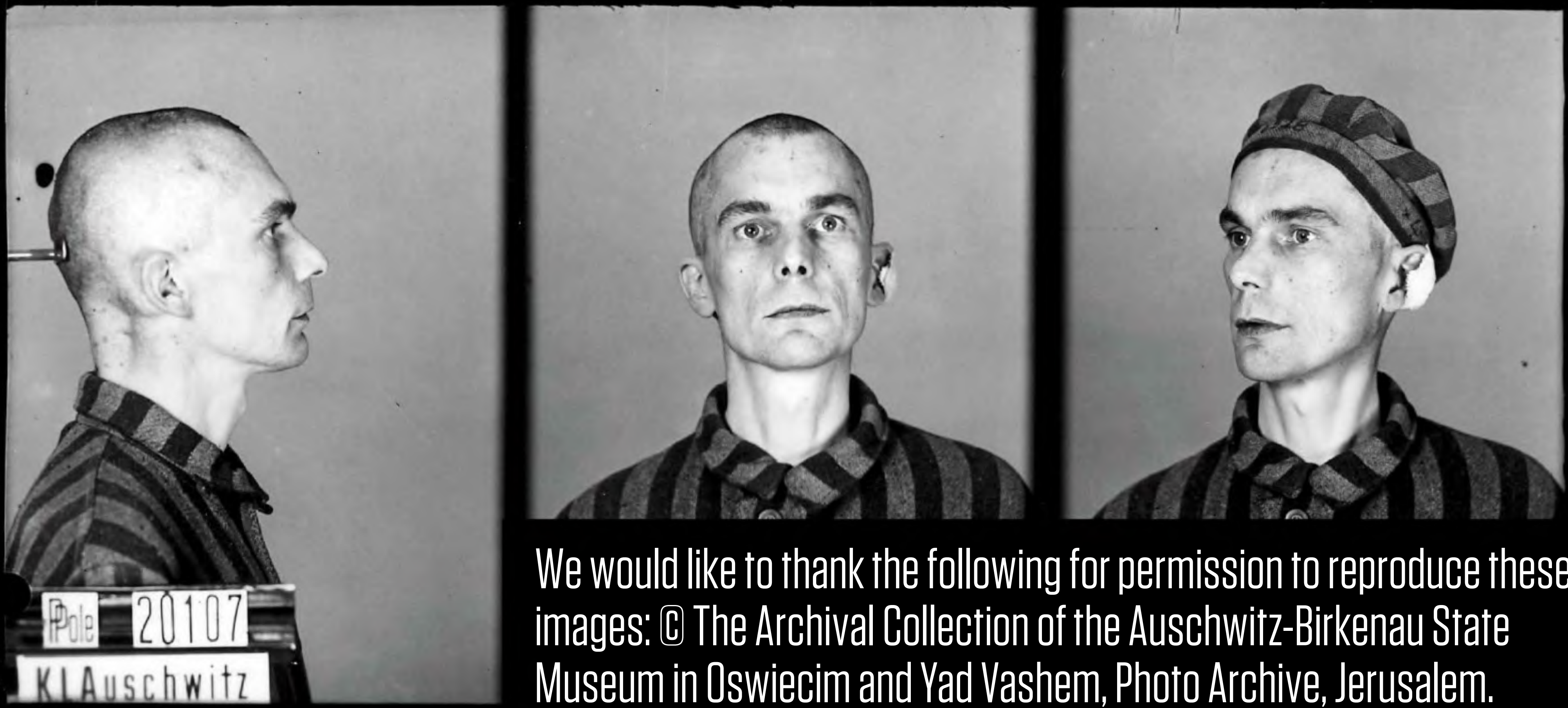
Right: *Birkenau, Poland, May 1944. Women and children on their way to gas chamber number 4*

Below: *Stanislaw Watycha (1906-41). Imprisoned in August 1941, number 20107 PPole. Stanislaw, a teacher, was shot on 11 November 1941 – Polish Independence Day – along with 150 other prisoners in one of the first executions involving Block 11's infamous 'Death Wall'*




I looked death in the eyes.
'I did it fifty thousand times...'
The Auschwitz Photographer
Maurizio Onnis
Luca Crippa
Based on the true story of WILHELM BRASSE prisoner 3444

The Auschwitz Photographer, by Luca Crippa and Maurizio Onnis, is on sale now


PPole 20107
KLAuschwitz

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MUSEUMS & EVENTS

Help rescue the Royal Marines Museum, learn about aviation history with the RAF Museum and tour HMS Belfast at home

Save the Royal Marines

The National Museum of the Royal Navy's tribute to Britain's elite amphibious infantrymen is appealing to the public to make donations for a delayed new venue

The Royal Marines are one of the five fighting arms of the Royal Navy. Tracing their origins back to 1664, the Marines are an elite, highly specialised and adaptable force that have fought in many major British conflicts since the Seven Years' War. This includes extensive fighting during the Napoleonic, Crimean and World Wars as well more recent deployments in the Falkland Islands, Iraq and Afghanistan.

The official Royal Marines Museum opened in 1958 at Eastney Barracks near Portsmouth, where its collections and displays were housed until 2017. An attraction within the National Museum of the Royal Navy (NMRN), the museum was due to reopen in 2020 at a new venue at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard. However, at a difficult time for the heritage industry largely due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the museum's reopening has been delayed, with millions of pounds still needing to be raised.

The NMRN plans to house the new museum in the Victorian Boathouse at the dockyard, which it considers a building appropriate for the Marines' impactful international story. This includes its huge collection of 8,000 medals, including all ten Victoria Crosses awarded to the Marines. There is also a rare decoration awarded to an officer, Lieutenant Lewis Buckle Reeve, who aided the mortally wounded Lord Nelson aboard HMS Victory at the Battle of Trafalgar.

The NMRN's vision for the new Royal Marines Museum has been developed following extensive audience research, consultation and activity planning that will transform access to the Marines' story. This includes exciting new programmes and activities, and increasing visitors four-fold.

As of February 2021, the museum has already raised or earmarked £5 million but it still needs to reach its total £10 million. Current funders of the project include the Heritage Lottery Fund (first round only), LIBOR Fund, Lockheed Martin, BAE Maritime Services, BMT and a range of individual, corporate and charitable trust donors. An additional £5 million still needs to be secured so that the NMRN can aim to reopen the museum by 2022.

The NMRN says, "Our message is simple; we have £5 million and need another £5 million to proceed. We are committed to opening a new museum in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard and our mission is well underway. Now is the time for us all to work together and support the need for the Royal Marines to have a museum that is worthy of its 355-year and unique history that recalls the sacrifice and service of the thousands of Royal Marines who have supported the nation through the darkest times."

***Below:** The Royal Marines Museum's new home will be the 'Action Stations', Boathouse 6 at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard*

***Right:** The museum has a statue called The Yomper that depicts a Royal Marine from the Falklands War of 1982*

To donate via JustGiving visit: **www.justgiving.com/campaign/newroyalmarinesmuseum**

ACTION STATIONS
ENTRANCE

Images © Alamy

Armchair Battleship Exploration

Take an in-depth trip inside HMS Belfast with just the click of a mouse

A Town-class light cruiser, HMS Belfast is the most significant surviving WWII Royal Navy warship. Famous for firing some of the first shots of D-Day as well as her service in the Arctic Convoys and the Korean War, Belfast is permanently moored on the River Thames in London. A popular tourist attraction operated by the Imperial War Museum (IWM), the ship is currently closed to visitors due to social distancing restrictions. Nevertheless, naval history enthusiasts can still explore her warren of rooms and corridors online with a high-definition virtual tour.

Created by Pan 3Sixty, the tour allows viewers to access the lower and upper decks, providing views of the whole ship. Pan 3Sixty worked closely with the IWM to create a custom-designed user interface. Alongside the 360-degree panoramas, the interface includes animated deck plans so that viewers can navigate from one location to the next, alongside a series of archive photographs of HMS Belfast in action. There are also a plethora of facts about the ship that provide a fascinating insight into the vessel and its wartime operations.

The IWM says, “The Pan 3Sixty team were very professional, a pleasure to work with and we are absolutely delighted with the results. The virtual tour of HMS Belfast, and in particular Pan 3Sixty’s exciting and dramatic 360-degree panoramas, are now the highlight of our website.”

HMS Belfast is moored near Tower Bridge in London and is one of the capital’s most popular tourist attractions

© Alamy

To take the HMS Belfast virtual tour visit:
www.pan3sixty.co.uk/portfolio/iwm-museum-virtual-tour

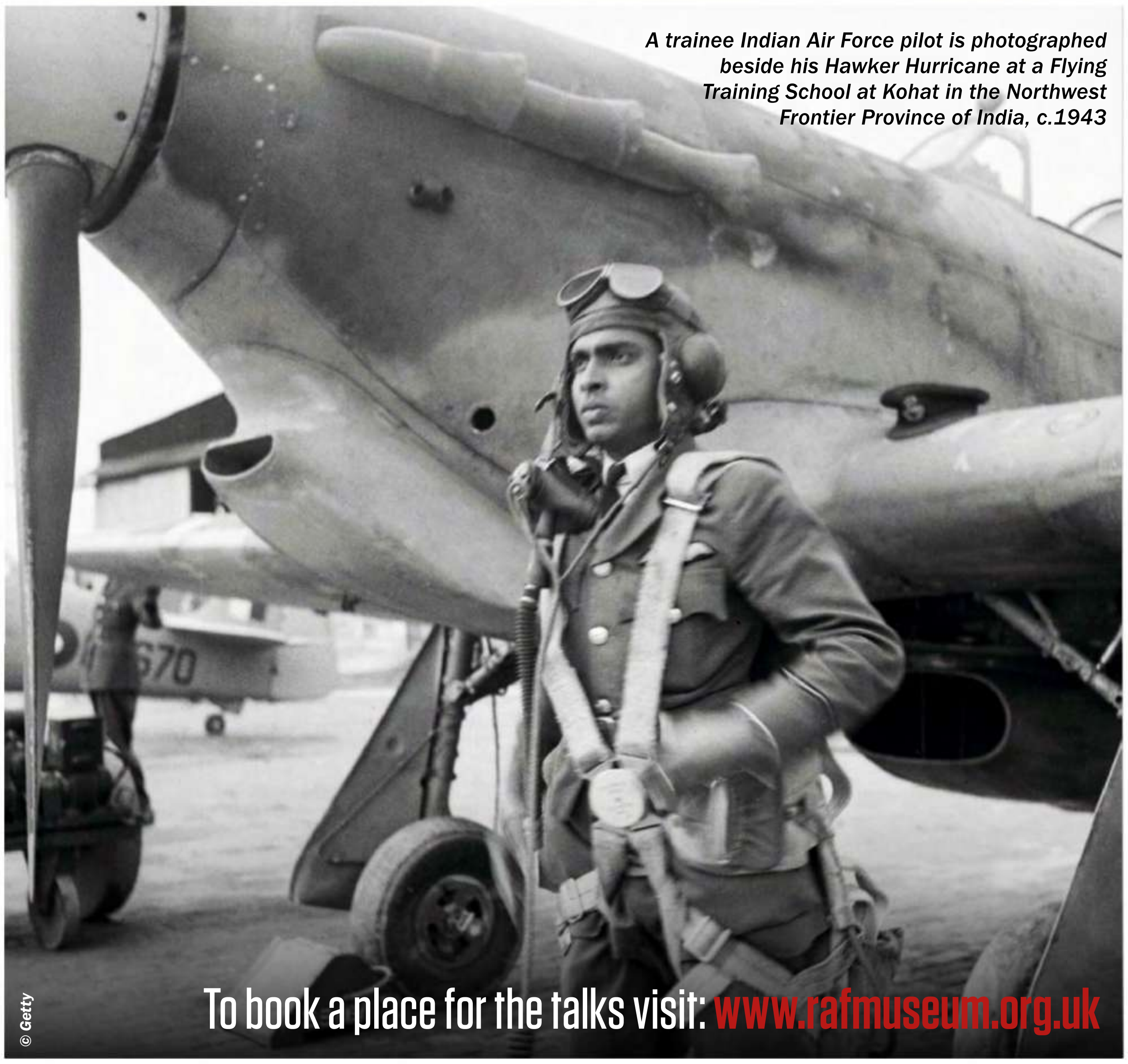
Airborne Talks

The Royal Air Force Museum is hosting virtual lectures in April on two fascinating wartime aviation topics: the Luftwaffe and the Indian Air Force

Virtual lectures are an excellent way of staying connected with museums during the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Many institutions are hosting these events for free, with the Royal Air Force Museum being no exception. In April, it’s hosting two virtual lectures by specialist historians: ‘Disarming The Luftwaffe, 1945-48’ and ‘The Indian Air Force In The Second World War’.

‘Disarming The Luftwaffe’ is presented by independent researcher Chris Rogers and takes place at 6pm on 8 April. Rogers will reveal how the RAF formed ten ‘Air Disarmament Wings’ of 3,000 airmen to dismantle the Luftwaffe’s infrastructure in Germany after WWII. By focussing on one of these units, No.8401 Wing, he will uncover the breadth and complexity of this operation, which saw tensions emerge with nearby Soviet forces.

‘The Indian Air Force’ will be presented by author KS Nair at 6pm on 22 April. The IAF was a small force by Allied standards but had a symbolic importance and little-known connections to many key battles, including Imphal and Kohima. Nair will talk about how the Indian aircrew that flew over the combat zones across the world helped to lay the foundations of what is now the world’s fourth-largest air force.



A trainee Indian Air Force pilot is photographed beside his Hawker Hurricane at a Flying Training School at Kohat in the Northwest Frontier Province of India, c.1943

© Getty

To book a place for the talks visit: **www.rafmuseum.org.uk**

SIKORSKI'S TOURISTS

Jennifer Grant from Queen Mary University of London uncovers the complex relationship between Polish and British armed forces during WWII

Jennifer Grant is a postgraduate researcher on the Polish Armed Forces in the West

The Polish contribution to the defence of the UK after 1940 was far more than the pilots who joined RAF squadrons – it included large numbers of exiled soldiers and sailors too. Speaking ahead of an online talk for the National Army Museum, Jennifer Grant examines the evolution of British-Polish attitudes towards each other during World War II. She discusses how the Poles were received by the British, their differing military doctrines and how they were ultimately betrayed by their allies.

How was Poland perceived by the British before WWII?

Prior to 1939, Britain gave little thought to Poland. The Polish community in Britain was small and Poland was considered another 'faraway country' – quaint and underdeveloped. However there was not complete ignorance: some British men had experience of Poland either as POWs during WWI or through the Military Mission sent to support her after independence. By the late 1930s there was increasing trade as well as international exchanges. Poland was never seen as anything other than the victim in German-Polish relations and the British were certainly more supportive of defending her than the French.

How were exiled Polish military personnel received in Britain from 1939?

The Poles had to fight the widespread perception that their military collapse was due to incompetence, outdated weaponry and tactics, although British attitudes varied. Individual airmen were welcomed within RAF squadrons, but there was initially little expectation that the Poles would be able to contribute in significant numbers. By contrast, Poland's navy was quickly put to work patrolling the east coast and protecting coal deliveries.

The vast majority were part of the Polish Army. They arrived in the aftermath of Dunkirk, when Britain was still reeling from the loss of material and rebuilding her own forces. The Poles were not, understandably, a priority. They were posted to Scotland and tasked with building defences and protecting Scotland's east coast. They encountered a great deal of sympathy: the king met the Polish president on his arrival in London and numerous charities extensively provided for the Poles arriving from France. Scottish communities were incredibly welcoming, laying on English classes, organising social events and cheering Polish military parades.

What differences in military tradition existed between the British and Polish armies before and during the Second World War?

The Polish Army created in 1918 had three military traditions to draw upon because Poles had served in the Russian, Austro-Hungarian and German armies prior to Polish independence. The doctrine that emerged in

the 1920s was most heavily influenced by the French, whose officers taught Polish soldiers in Warsaw, and many Poles studied in France.

These differences were only some of the challenges facing the Poles as they integrated into the Western Allied war effort. Fighter pilots needed to learn English to operate within the Dowding System and their instrument panels were covered in unfamiliar measurement units. Doctrine relating to armoured divisions was itself evolving throughout the war, necessitating a wholesale restructuring of the 1st Polish Armoured Division in 1943.

The Poles took part in exercises with Canadian and French troops, as well as British. Their high morale and energy was frequently noticed but the challenge is in deciding how far these judgements are based on purely military performance or wider cultural perceptions.

The Polish air contribution is famous but what role did the Polish Army and Navy contribute to the defence of the UK?

Even in 1940, Polish fighter squadrons occupied far more British column inches than any other feature of the Polish Armed Forces, including their airmen in Bomber and Coastal Command. The Polish Navy which arrived in Britain consisted of just three destroyers and two submarines, although this increased by 1945. The destroyers primarily escorted convoys but they contributed to the evacuation of Dunkirk, supported the Dieppe Raid and D-Day.

The Polish Army was desperate to return to the front line. Poles recruited into the Special Operations Executive and commando units were able to contribute directly, but the majority found that their role in defending Scotland's east coast, though approached with professional thoroughness, was static and frustrating. While it freed up British Home Defence forces, it quickly became clear that Germany was not about to invade St Andrews. The British-based Poles didn't see action until 1944 and the North-West Europe Campaign.

"IN 1940, POLISH FIGHTER SQUADRONS OCCUPIED FAR MORE BRITISH COLUMN INCHES THAN ANY OTHER FEATURE OF THE POLISH ARMED FORCES, INCLUDING THEIR AIRMEN IN BOMBER AND COASTAL COMMAND"

To what extent did the entry of the Soviet Union on the Allied side affect the relationship between the British and Polish governments?

The defence of Polish sovereignty may have brought Britain into the war but it was only ever as a line in the sand and the British wanted diplomatic freedom with regards to territory in Central Europe. In this, her strategic ambitions were entirely in conflict with the Polish government-in-exile, and the two agreed only on the need to defeat Nazi Germany.

Polish hopes that a free Poland would be restored ended once the need to placate Stalin became the priority. When the graves of 20,000 Polish prisoners, murdered by the Soviets, were discovered at Katyn, the British were frustrated by the Polish insistence on an investigation. There was also an increase in anti-Polish propaganda produced by the Soviets, which led to a further hardening of attitudes among the British population.

From the Polish perspective, the failure of the Allies to support the Warsaw Uprising and then the agreements reached at Yalta regarding Poland's borders led to a huge sense of betrayal among the Poles in the West.

To what extent has Britain neglected the Polish contribution to its wartime defence, as well as the campaigns in mainland Europe?

The Polish contribution had already become an embarrassment to the British due to the alliance with Stalin. Most famously, the Poles were not invited to the 1946 Victory Parade as Britain no longer recognised the London-based Polish government. The majority of Poles who settled in Britain had lost homes, family and social standing but were forced to take up manual occupations due to the policy of the new Labour administration. They were now considered as immigrants rather than exiles and former allies.

However, this is all part of a bigger picture. The myth of 'Britain Alone' has effectively erased the extent to which wartime Britain was a hugely cosmopolitan place. It is also evident that wartime Britain was more culturally aligned with the 'English-speaking peoples' than with the liberated peoples of Europe.

Władysław Sikorski, Prime Minister of the Polish government-in-exile and Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Armed Forces, inspects troops at their camp in England, c.1940

Jennifer Grant's online talk *Sikorski's Tourists: The Polish Armed Forces In Britain, 1939-45* is being hosted by the National Army Museum. It will be streamed on Crowdcast on 26 March 2021 at 12pm and admission is free. **To book a ticket visit: www.nam.ac.uk/whats-on**

NATIONAL
ARMY
MUSEUM

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REVIEWS

Our pick of the latest military history books to hit the shelves

MI9 A HISTORY OF THE SECRET SERVICE FOR ESCAPE AND EVASION IN WORLD WAR TWO

THE INTRIGUING STORY OF A SECRET WARTIME WORLD

Author: Helen Fry **Price:** £20 **Publisher:** Yale University Press

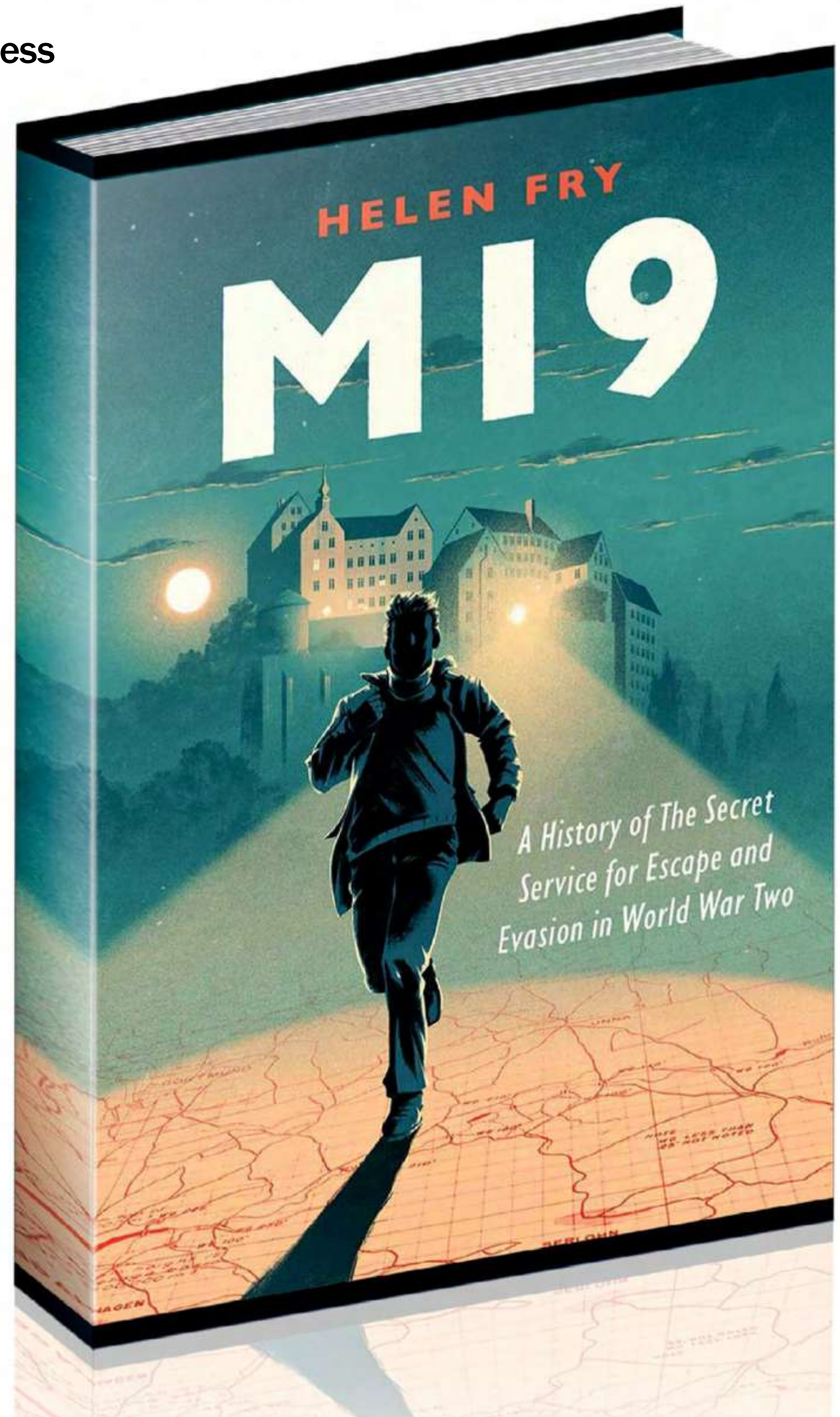
In her latest book, *MI9: A History Of The Secret Service For Escape And Evasion In World War Two*, Helen Fry tells the fascinating story of MI9, an almost forgotten branch of the Secret Service. Established in 1939, this War Office department remained in operation until 1945, and had two responsibilities. First, MI9 offered help to escaped Allied prisoners of war attempting to flee Axis countries to safety. Second, it gave assistance to military personnel stranded behind enemy lines as they attempted to evade capture and reach Allied countries. In the face of terrible danger, the intelligence operatives and resistance fighters of MI9 established clandestine routes across Nazi-occupied Europe by which Allied soldiers could find their way home.

The story of MI9 is the stuff of spy fiction, and it certainly makes for a fascinating subject. Fry is fortunate to have enjoyed access to previously classified files which allows for a more in-depth study of the department than ever before. The combination of this material, eyewitness testimony and some truly breathtaking tales of heroism and survival make this a must-read for anyone with an interest in the history of the intelligence services of World War II. The narrative is peopled by some familiar names and some who will likely be less well known to readers.

MI9: A History Of The Secret Service For Escape And Evasion In World War Two is clearly the product of an immense amount of research. What shines through most of all are the individual stories of those who put their lives on the line time after time for the sake of the war effort, not to mention the heroic Allied personnel who made such dangerous escapes and risked everything to be able to fight again. It's no criticism to say that the book sometimes reads more like spy fiction than historical truth, but such was the work of MI9.

The book, however, does contain some small but niggling factual errors that occasionally undermine its impact and authority. It also has a tendency to move back and forth through time, leading to some repetition that might have been avoided with a more linear approach. Readers with a particular interest in the intelligence services will no doubt find much to debate in Fry's assertion that the work of MI9 as an intelligence gathering organisation has been overlooked. She argues that it should be considered alongside MI5, Bletchley Park et al as a centre of military intelligence, and this is certainly an intriguing new theory that would bear some further examination.

MI9's exploits during World War II make for a fascinating story, with a cast of characters who readers won't soon forget. The aforementioned errors cannot go unremarked, but the book's extensive bibliography will reward those who wish to undertake some further research. As a history of an overlooked intelligence organisation and a celebration of its extraordinary achievements, there is much here to enjoy. **CC**


HELEN FRY
MI9
A History of The Secret Service for Escape and Evasion in World War Two

"THE STORY OF MI9 IS THE STUFF OF SPY FICTION, AND IT CERTAINLY MAKES FOR A FASCINATING SUBJECT"

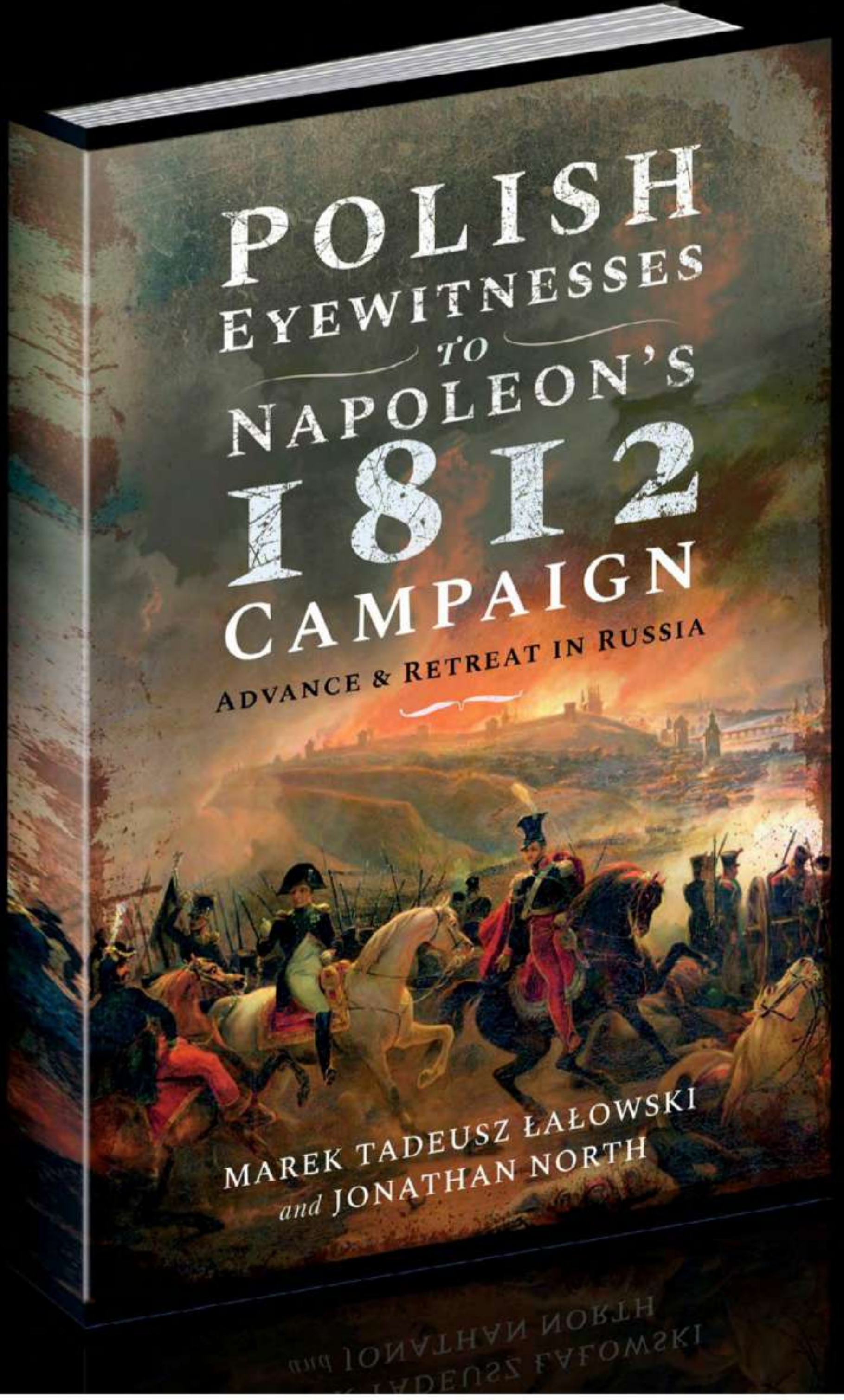
POLISH EYEWITNESSES

TO NAPOLEON'S 1812 CAMPAIGN ADVANCE & RETREAT IN RUSSIA

A COLLECTION OF NEVER-BEFORE TRANSLATED POLISH EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS OFFERS MANY NEW INSIGHTS INTO NAPOLEON'S DISASTROUS 1812 CAMPAIGN IN RUSSIA

Authors: Marek Tadeusz Lalowski & Jonathan North
Publisher: Pen and Sword Price: £25

Amid the news onslaught at the start of 2021, a discovery dating back to 1812 made headlines: the remains of 120 soldiers, three women and three adolescents, all thought to have fallen in the of Battle of Vyazma, were ceremoniously reburied in Russia. The Napoleonic Wars and the allure of Bonaparte himself still holds Europe under its spell – perhaps nowhere more so than in Poland, where the Napoleonic Wars will forever be intertwined with Poland's own struggle for independence. With their country partitioned by Austria, Prussia and Russia, many Poles pledged their support for Napoleon, who had proclaimed the constitution of The Duchy of Warsaw in 1807 and hoped their continued loyalty would in time bring the full restoration of the Polish Kingdom. The Polish Legions were first formed by General Jan Henryk Dabrowski and served with the French Army, seeing combat in most of Napoleon's campaigns throughout Italy, Egypt, the West Indies and later Spain. Although morale fell when it became ever more apparent that they were sacrificed in theatres of war which had no direct affect on the resurrection of Poland, veterans of these campaigns would come to form the core of the Duchy's army raised under Prince Józef Poniatowski. The Polish contingent stood at an astonishing 100,000-strong when Napoleon's Grande Armée gathered in the spring of 1812.


POLISH EYEWITNESSES TO NAPOLEON'S 1812 CAMPAIGN
ADVANCE & RETREAT IN RUSSIA
MAREK TADEUSZ ŁAŁOWSKI and JONATHAN NORTH

Yet the Poles often find themselves excluded from Western narratives of the Napoleonic Wars, where Adam Zamoyski's *1812*, Henrich von Brandt's *In The Legions Of Napoleon* and Dezydery Chlapowski's *Memoirs Of A Polish Lancer* prove to be excellent, yet far too few exceptions. This makes Marek Lalowski and Jonathan North's *Polish Eyewitnesses To Napoleon's 1812 Campaign* a most welcome new addition. Albeit short, it gives a broad range of accounts selected from diaries, letters and memoirs, many of which have never before been translated into English. We learn about what happened after the gathering of 'the greatest army the world had ever seen', such as the march through Russia, the battles of Smolensk and Borodino, the burning of Moscow, the winter retreat and the crossing of the treacherous Berezina River.

These personal accounts give us a vivid and immediate impression of what happened. In one such testimony, Captain Prot Lelewel, V Corps, recalls: "Our march resembled a funeral procession. I dragged myself along with others, not knowing if I was asleep or awake as I went. The cold and hungry skeletons covered in all possible kinds of dress wanted food and fire, and often met only death. We ringed the campfires, and sleep was easy, but when the fire was extinguished some woke from the cold, while the others slept for ever. My head often rested on one who would not rise again, and I used to stand up and leave with indifference. Despite him being a stranger, I had also forgotten that he was a man."

The Polish perspective also offers many valuable insights into the failures and strategic blunders of the campaign, one of which remains intrinsically linked to the very question of Poland's independence. As Ignacy Pradzynski on General Dabrowski's staff summarised after defeat, a significant error lay in Napoleon's aim to complete the war in a single campaign instead of first establishing the lines of Old Poland and utilising the subsequent winter truce to enlarge his army with troops from these liberated lands.

As the Grande Armée fell apart, so did Poland's hope for independence. Yet in the years to follow, as new uprisings would erupt, the legend of the Polish Legions lived on. The unrivalled splendour of their uniforms still glistened in the collective Polish memory and with time the *Song Of The Polish Legions In Italy* became the national anthem of Poland: "March, march Dabrowski…" **MB**

A WORLD HISTORY OF WAR CRIMES

A HISTORY OF THE LAWS OF WAR CREATED TO CURB THE WORST EXCESSES OF CONFLICT, FROM ANTIQUITY TO THE PRESENT

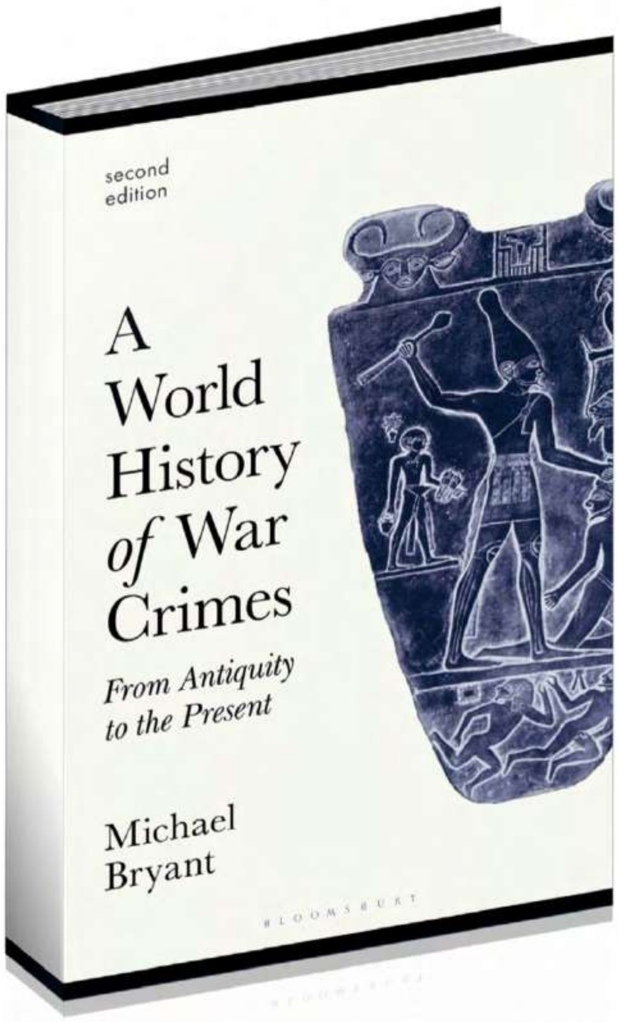
Author: Michael Bryant
Publisher: Bloomsbury
Price: £26.99

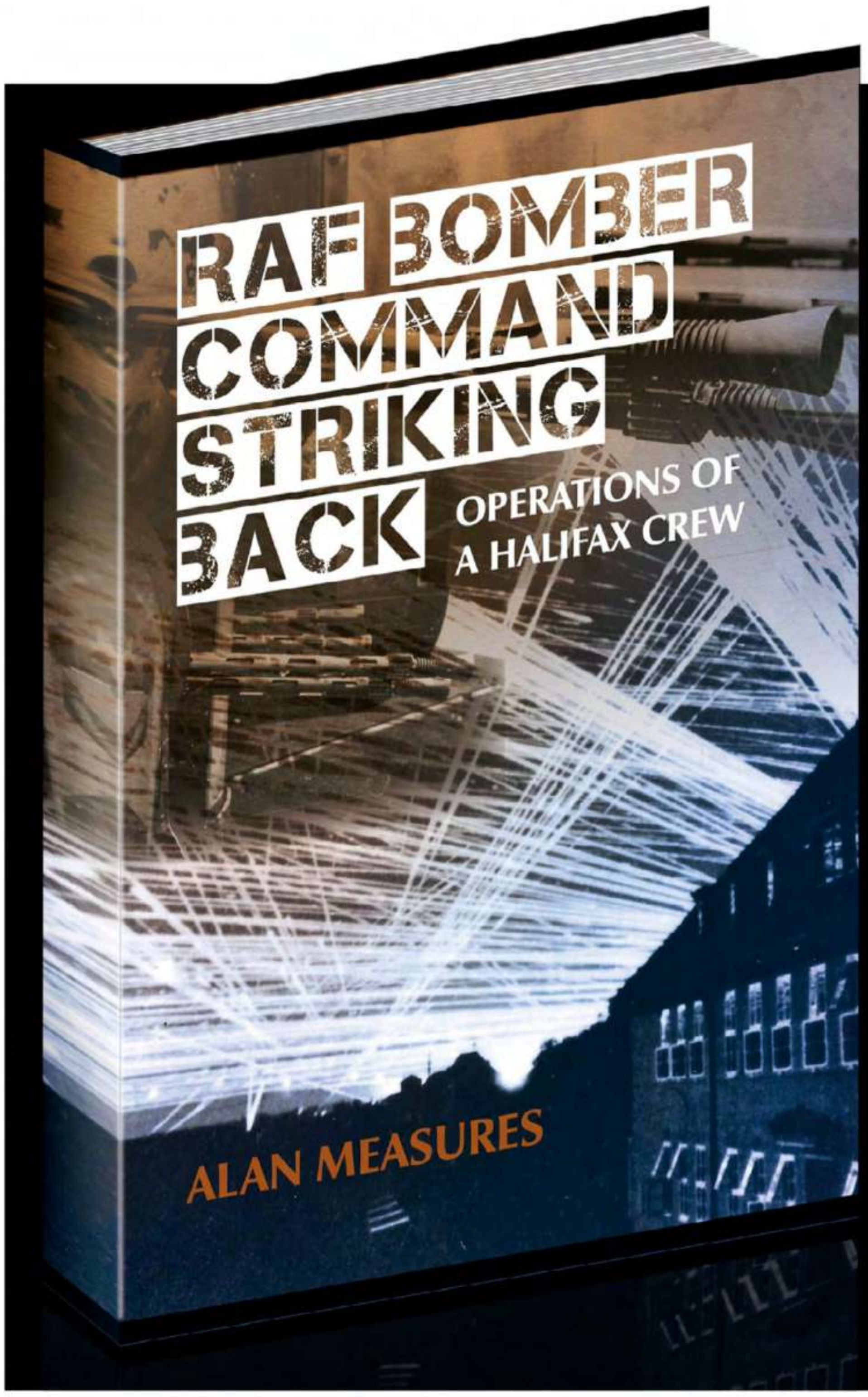
The animal kingdom adheres to a strict code of behaviour that proscribes violence between members of the same species, the exceptions being disputes over food and females. Not so human beings, who have been butchering one another for millennia in clashes sparked by territorial expansion, tribal rivalries, political systems and religious beliefs, to name just a few of the causes of warfare.

Mention the term 'war crimes' and the contemporary imagination conjures up an image of a roomful of grim-faced Nazis awaiting their death sentence in a Nuremberg court in 1946. Author Michael Bryant takes the story back more than 10,000 years to remind us that Stone Age societies were by no means strangers to indiscriminate violence, though massacre victims rarely numbered more than several dozen – small numbers compared with the millions slaughtered by the Nazi regime.

It was with the civilisations of Mesopotamia and Egypt that reasoning to legitimise warfare came into being. The rulers of both empires sought the approval of the gods for their military campaigns. This implied a certain code of behaviour on the battlefield, such as in the case of captives, who might be set free to work as farmers or mercenaries. For instance, a royal inscription from the reign of Samsu-iluna of Babylon shows how the advanced stages of socio-economic development can assimilate foreign captives into the fabric of societies. Even so, sophisticated ancient cultures like Greece and Rome continued to kill and enslave prisoners of war.

Bryant's exhaustive research focuses on deep structures underlying the commitment of atrocities in warfare and the development of the laws of war, from prehistory to contemporary issues like the status of guerrillas and the treatment of independence movement fighters. **JS**




RAF BOMBER COMMAND STRIKING BACK
OPERATIONS OF A HALIFAX CREW
ALAN MEASURES

RAF BOMBER COMMAND STRIKING BACK

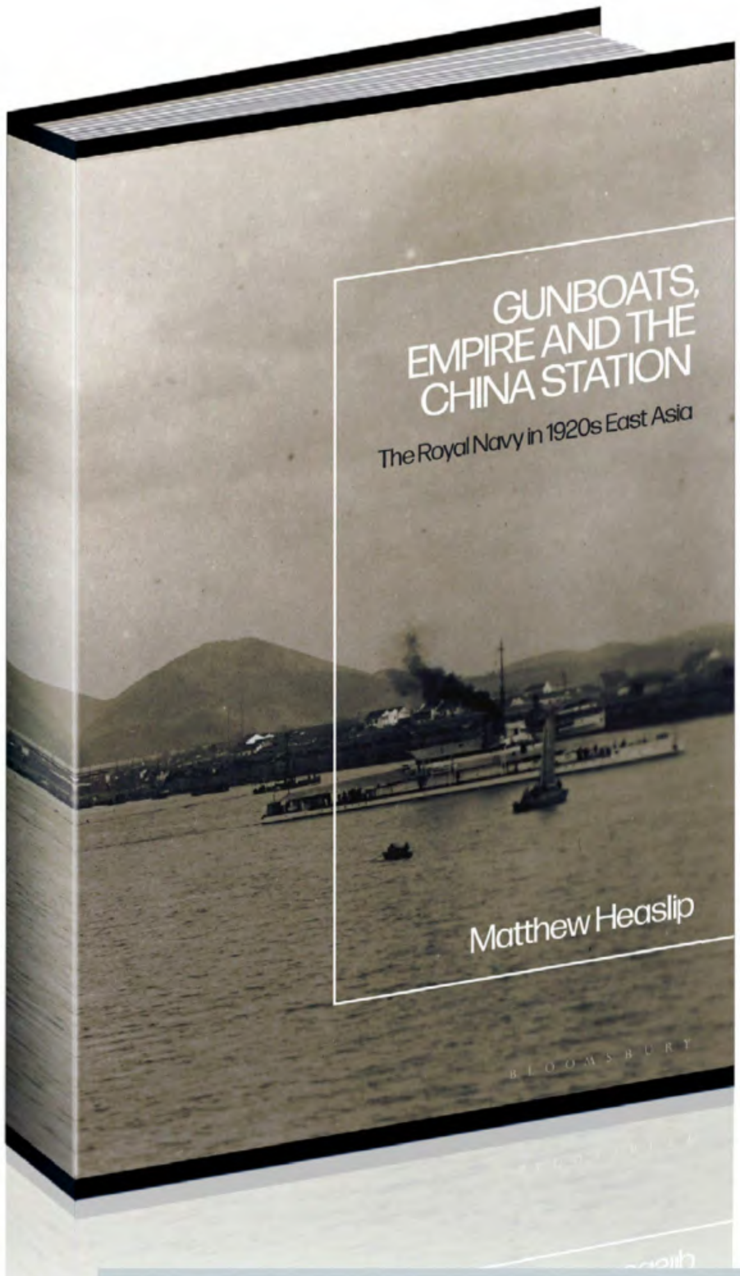
OPERATIONS OF A HALIFAX CREW

Author: Alan Measures **Publisher:** Whittles Publishing

This is a truly pleasing book which focusses on the operations of just one crew who served in RAF Bomber Command during the Second World War – specifically, six men who crewed a Halifax of 102 Squadron. As such, *RAF Bomber Command Striking Back* is a most useful addition to our sum of knowledge about Bomber Command operations. It grew from the author's initial intent to construct a family tree when, in 2011, he discovered details recorded by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission about his cousin, Wireless Operator/Air Gunner Sgt Len Starbuck, lost on 26 June 1942. His interest piqued, Measures found himself side-tracked from his family tree research into investigating the tragically short lives of Starbuck and his crew, all lost on their final sortie.

For the period of Starbuck's time on 102 Squadron, the author sets out to tell the story of each of the squadron's operations and the involvement of Starbuck and his crew. This he does in a most readable and engaging fashion, interspersing the account of each night's operation with route maps, orders of battle, losses, target details and more.

These 302 pages of tightly packed and detailed research are supplemented with excellent imagery, appendices, reference notes and details of German anti-aircraft and night-fighting capabilities. The suddenness with which the narrative of Starbuck's war ends as the aircraft goes down is chilling. The brief sentence: "It was 0308 hrs" underlines the awful last moments of the six young men. This is a remarkable and highly recommended piece of work. **AS**



GUNBOATS, EMPIRE & THE CHINA STATION

THE STORY OF THE ROYAL NAVY'S THIRD-LARGEST FLEET, FIGHTING FOR CONTROL OF THE CHINA STATION OUTPOST IN THE 1920S

Author: Matthew Heaslip **Publisher:** Bloomsbury **Price:** £85

In the period between the two World Wars, the Royal Navy's third-largest fleet bore the exotic title the China Station. In his scholarly tale of British strategy in the South China Sea, author Matthew Heaslip highlights the importance of this fleet to Britain's foreign policy and East Asian geopolitics.

These were far from peaceful times for the Royal Navy in the region and was a period of clashes in China throughout most of the 1920s. As the author points out, "Indeed, the country (China) was the scene of the Navy's most sustained active deployment over the entire interwar period and events in China came very close to ending Britain's peace."

During this decade, the British Empire maintained considerable interests in China, built up after Britain forced open the country's borders to Western merchants through the two Opium Wars between 1839 and 1860. The Chinese navy of the day was no match for Britain's sea power, but it did pose a threat to Royal Navy gunboats and sloops.

An additional threat in those years was an increasingly aggressive Japan, which became a factor in Royal Navy tactical planning. Concerns over both Asian challenges led to one of the largest- peacetime deployments of Royal Navy warships east of Suez.

After World War I the China Station found itself on the front line. This decade of 'violent peace' brought fundamental shifts in Britain's relationship with China, and the Royal Navy played a central role in maintaining the Empire and Britain's strategic planning. This was underscored by the almost-forgotten Shanghai Crisis of 1927, a conflict brought to light in this book through the author's meticulous research, which took Britain to the point of partial mobilisation. **JS**

SAD JOYS ON DEPLOYMENT

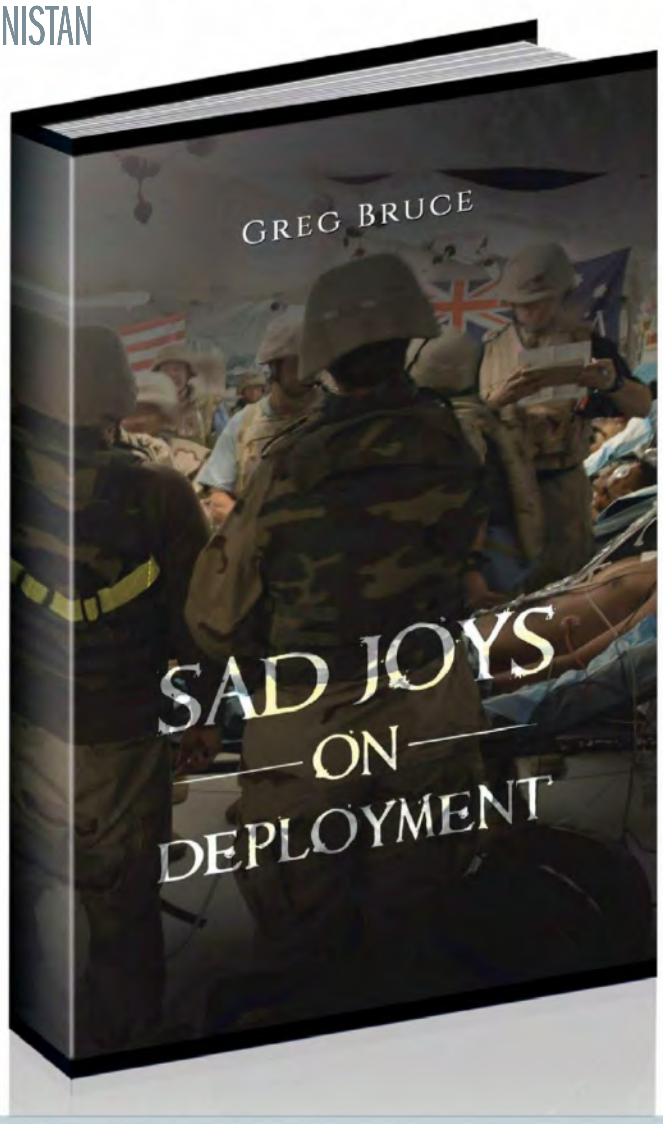
A BRIEF BUT DETAILED FIRST-HAND ACCOUNT OF MODERN WAR ZONES, FROM RWANDA TO AFGHANISTAN

Author: Greg Bruce **Publisher:** Austin Macauley **Price:** £11.99

Orthopaedic surgeon Greg Bruce was recruited into the Royal Australian Air Force Specialist Reserve in 1988 and undertook ten deployments between 1995 and 2008. *Sad Joys On Deployment* is Bruce's account of those ten deployments, ranging from Rwanda in 1995 to Afghanistan in 2008. Despite his civilian practice, Bruce was thrown into the deep end of military surgeries in various war zones, dealing with all manner of injuries.

He delivers his record of that service bluntly – his first day saw a 12-year-old boy having both legs amputated within five minutes the youngster's arrival at Kigali Hospital, Rwanda. Bruce delivers his summaries of events in a similar, matter-of-fact manner, so too his criticisms of various administrative bodies and the cost- and corner-cutting he witnessed. His ten deployments varied in length, totalling 14 months in all, ranging from only a few days (in the aftermath of the Bali bombing in 2005) to several months in Iraq in 2004. Bruce's chapters are brief and to the point, and the book travels at what feels like breakneck speed.

This is not a chronological account, however, and Bruce explores subjects like a typical day and the types of injuries he encountered. There are insights aplenty, like how military injuries differ from civilian injuries and how to treat an IED injury compared to a high-velocity gunshot wound. This perspective is not one usually on the horizon of the military historian but it offers new and unexpected insights about contemporary warfare and its impact. Its 150 pages give us new perspectives on contemporary warfare. **MD**



"BRUCE'S FIRST DAY SAW A 12-YEAR-OLD BOY HAVING BOTH LEGS AMPUTATED WITHIN FIVE MINUTES OF THE YOUNGSTER'S ARRIVAL AT KIGALI HOSPITAL"

WWII THIS MONTH...

APRIL 1941

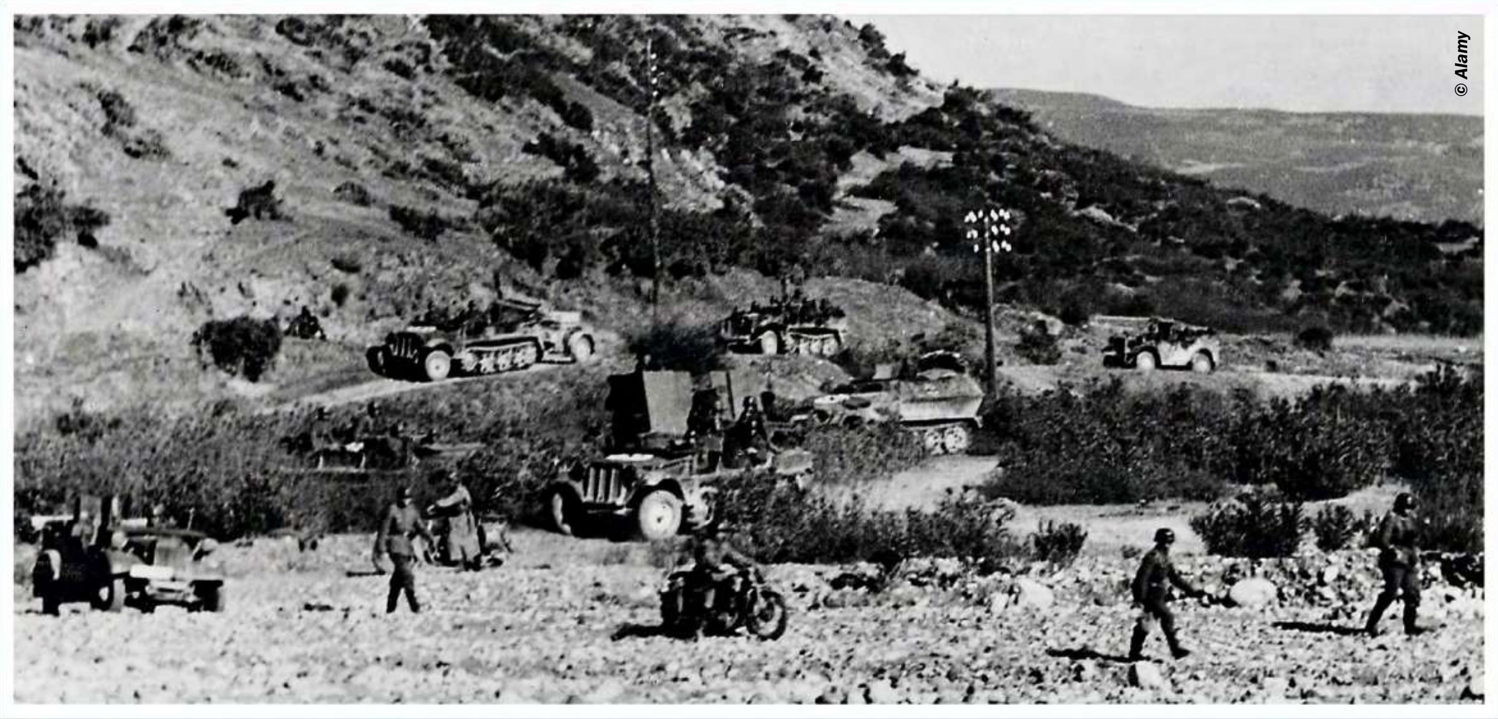
To commemorate 80 years since the Second World War, **History of War** will be taking a look at some of the key events taking place during each month of the conflict

INVASION OF YUGOSLAVIA

Beginning on 6 April the Axis invasion of unprepared Yugoslavia lasted just 11 days, sending the young King Peter II into exile. As well as German troops, Bulgarian, Hungarian and Italian forces took part in the offensive, which resulted in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia being carved up between the triumphant Axis powers, who immediately continued their progress into Greece.

THE LAST BATTLE OF THERMOPYLAE

During the Nazi invasion of Greece, German forces engaged with Greek and ANZAC defenders at Thermopylae, where the Spartan-led Greek defenders had fought and lost against the Persian invasion in 480 BCE. The topography of Thermopylae meant it was still an ideal location to fight a defensive battle some 2,421 years later. Around 11,000 men of the New Zealand Army's 2nd Infantry Division defended the pass while the bulk of the Allied forces retreated south. The holding action succeeded in delaying the Germans for long enough to allow the Allies to retreat in good order.



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IRAQ'S COUP D'ETAT

On 3 April, a nationalist coup overthrew the pro-British government in Iraq. Led by former Prime Minister Rashid Ali Al-Gaylani, the Golden Square movement sought to throw the British out of Iraq entirely, with the aid of German intelligence services and, they hoped, the growing Axis military strength in the Mediterranean. Iraqi forces attacked the RAF base near the town of Habbaniya, west of Baghdad, on 30 April – the base was defended by the 1st Battalion of the King's Own Royal Regiment, pro-British Arab forces, and a small number of air cadets and instructors. RAF Habbaniya was placed under siege by the Iraqis, effectively beginning the brief Anglo-Iraqi War.

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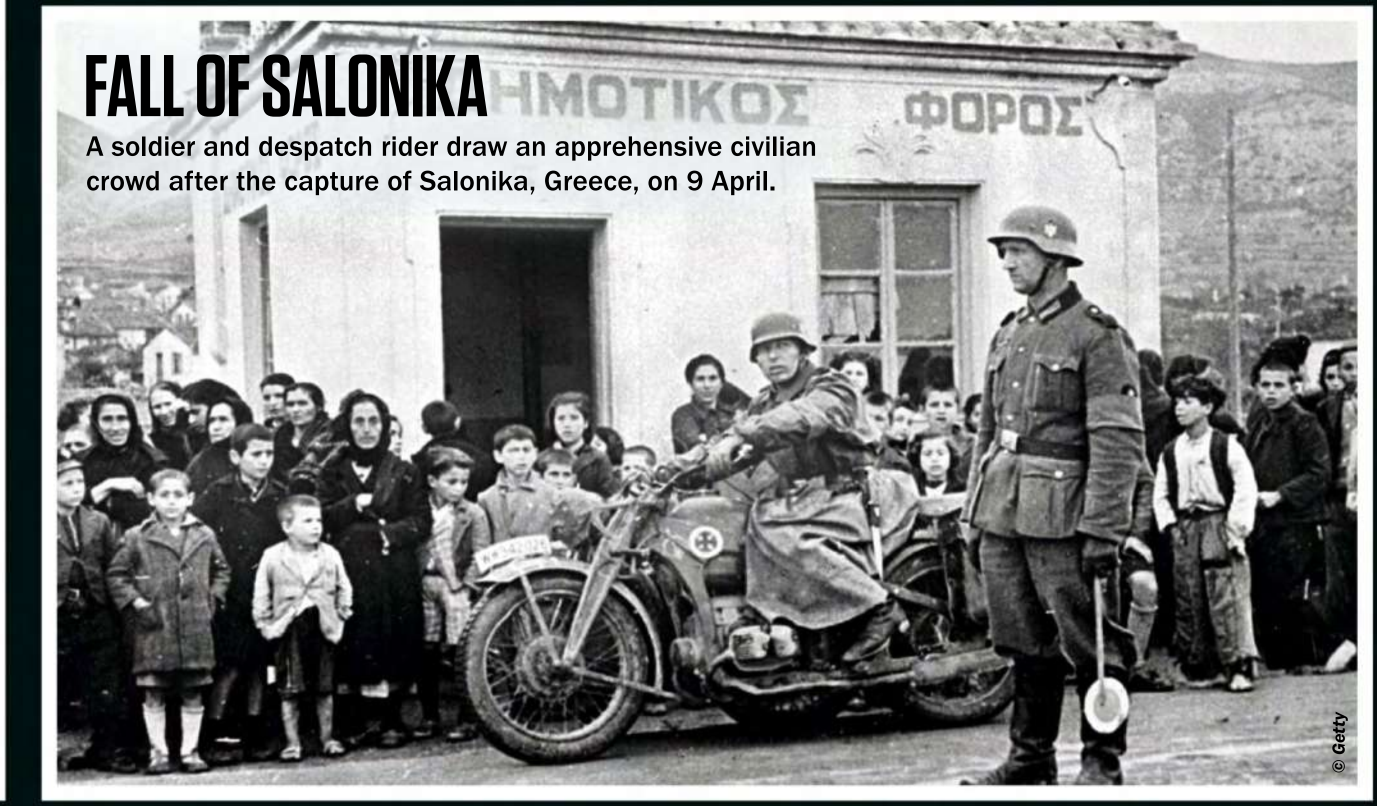
FALL OF SALONIKA

A soldier and despatch rider draw an apprehensive civilian crowd after the capture of Salonika, Greece, on 9 April.



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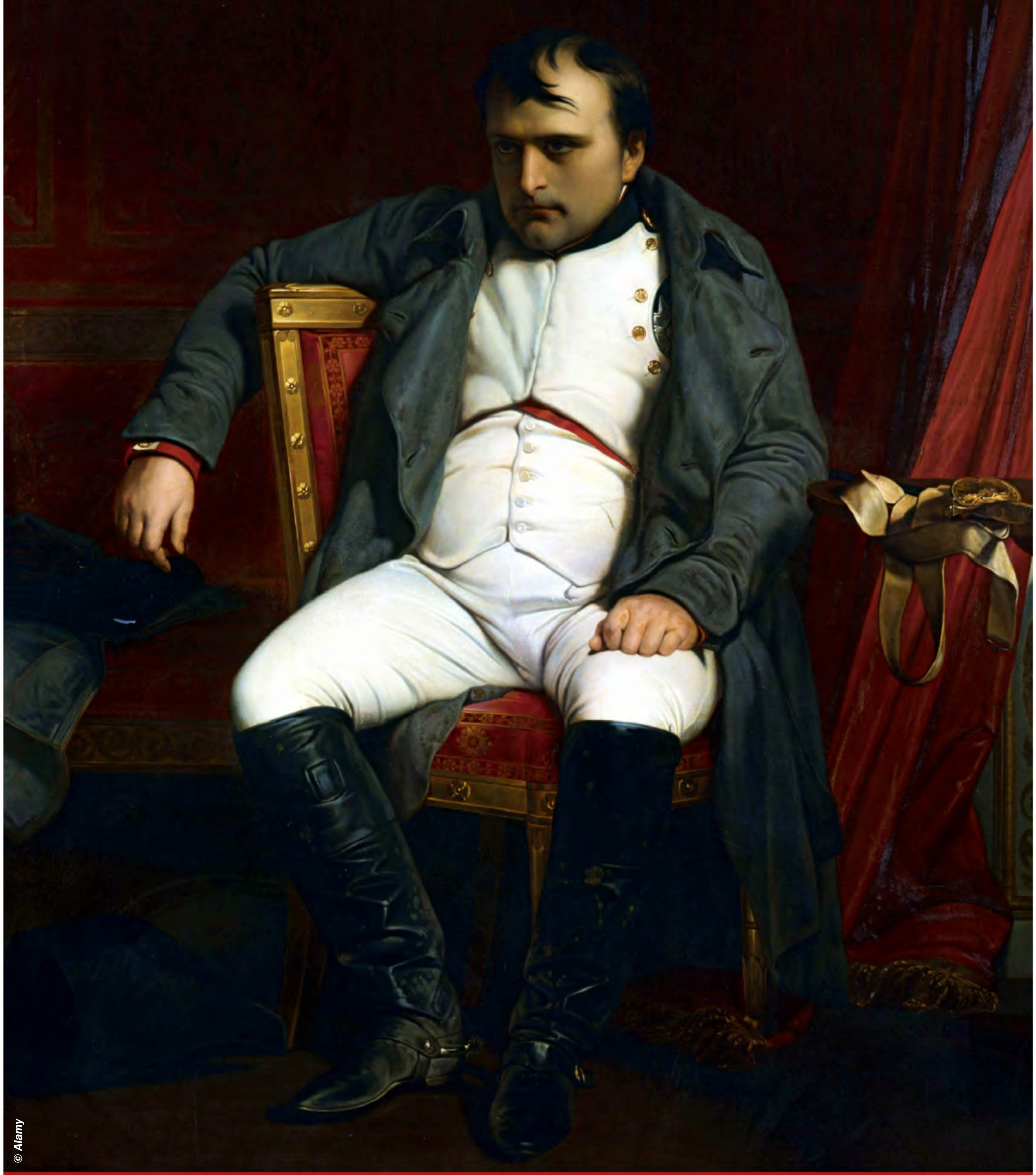

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Editorial
Editor-in-Chief **Tim Williamson**
timothy.williamson@futurenet.com
Senior Designer **Curtis Fermor-Dunman**
Features Editor **Tom Garner**
Production Editor **Iain Noble**
Senior Art Editor **Duncan Crook**

Contributors
Marianna Bukowski, Catherine Curzon, Charles Ginger, Stuart Hadaway, Michael Haskew, Jules Stewart, John Trigg, William Welsh

Photography
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Advertising
Media packs are available on request
UK Commercial Director **Clare Dove**
clare.dove@futurenet.com
Senior Advertising Manager **Matthew Johnston**
matthew.johnston@futurenet.com
07801 930735
Account Manager **Garry Brookes**
garry.brookes@futurenet.com
+44 020 3970 4176

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Head of Print Licensing **Rachel Shaw**
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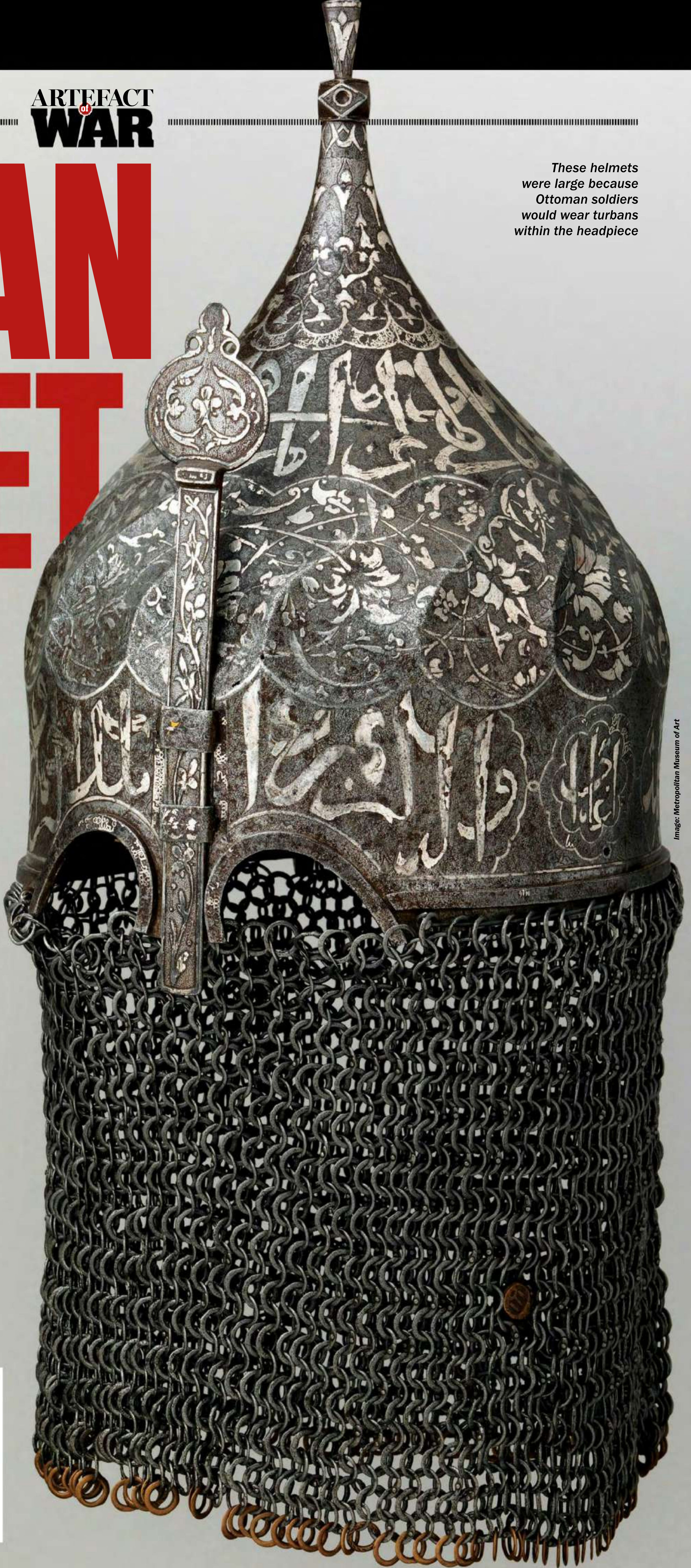
TURBAN HELMET



These helmets were large because Ottoman soldiers would wear turbans within the headpiece

Image: Metropolitan Museum of Art

This distinctive headpiece was one of the most recognisable symbols of the Ottoman Empire's power during the Early Modern Period

Originating in Ottoman Turkey in the Late Middle Ages, turban helmets had a bulbous appearance that imitated the folds of a turban. Early examples were conical in shape but they increasingly became more elaborate in design. Many of them also included an aventail, which was a curtain of chain mail that attached to the main skull of the helmet. The aventail protected the lower half of the face and neck while also enabling the wearer to move their head more freely compared with full plate-metal helmets such as the bascinet.

The turban helm pictured here dates from the 15th-16th century and represents the growing strength of the Ottoman Empire during that period. Sultan Mehmed II famously destroyed the Byzantine Empire when he conquered Constantinople in 1453 before Suleiman the Magnificent (r.1520-66) ruled vast territories. These included large parts of the Middle East and North Africa while the Ottomans made great advances into Central Europe.

All of these successes made the Ottoman Empire extremely wealthy and powerful. Its glory can be seen in the helmet, which is not just made of steel and iron but also silver and copper alloy. The bottom band has an inscription with a verse from the Quran while the aventail is attached with a lead seal. This seal is stamped with the mark of the Ottoman arsenal in Constantinople and suggests that the helmet was taken as a prize during the Ottoman conquests of Persia (modern-day Iran) and the Caucasus during the early 16th century. It is possible that it was manufactured in Shirvan, a historical Iranian region that became a vassal Ottoman territory.

THE MET

This helmet is part of the collections of the Department of Arms and Armor at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Known as 'The Met', the museum is the largest art museum in the United States and contains the popular Department of Arms and Armor.

www.metmuseum.org

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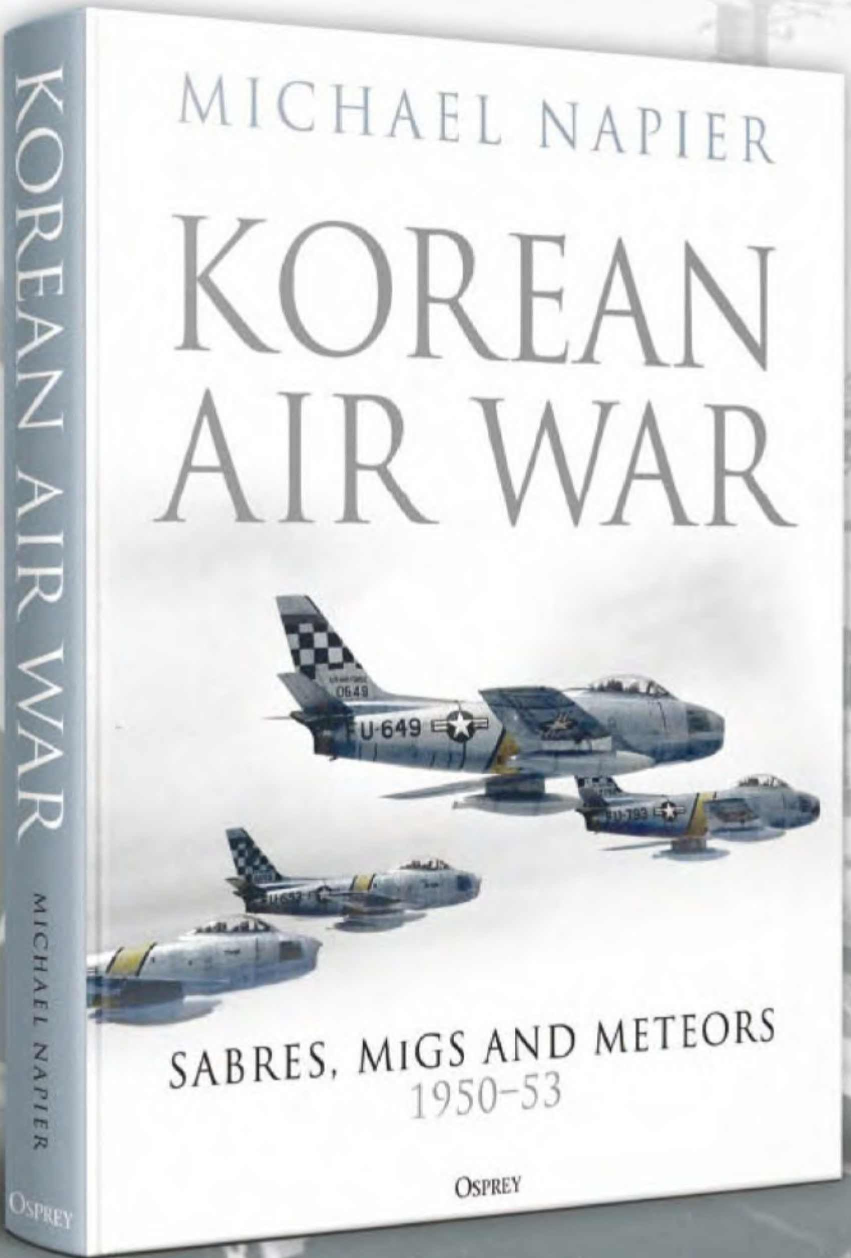
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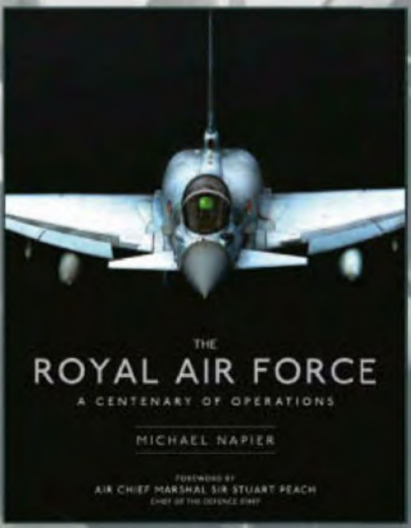
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